

# NEW YORK Saturday Evening Journal

## A HOME WEEKLY

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### AN OLD MAN'S MEMORY.

BY KEN E. REXFORD.

AUTHOR OF "SILVER THREADS AMONG THE GOLD."

The frosts of age are on his brow;  
Life's year has passed its summer part;  
He only has his memories now  
To keep the winter from his heart.  
One memory always comes to him  
When twilight wraps the world about,  
And in the heaven-arch, shadow-dim,  
The stars come peeping shyly out.  
It always brings the summer back,  
Sweet with the breath of balmy flowers;  
No winds from tropic shores he lacks  
To warm his heart through winter hours.  
Again he hears a voice, more sweet  
Than voice of breeze, or bird, or bee,  
Whose cadence nothing can repeat,  
Except the old man's memory.  
It thrills him like a draught of wine,  
And listening, he grows young once more.  
In yellow locks his fingers twine,  
Whose gold the grave mold covers o'er.  
What sweet, sweet words she whispers o'er!  
Her breath is balm upon his cheek!  
Oh, whispers from the shadow-shore,  
No words but true ones can you speak!  
Her head upon his happy heart  
Drops like a tired child's to rest,  
And into gladdest slumber start  
The birds of love within his breast.  
Well, let him dream. To dream is best  
When waking hours are drear and long,  
But dreams like his are full of rest,  
And sweet with blossom, scent and song.  
In dreams he never can grow old,  
Life's winter-time is far away;  
His heart forgets the frost and cold,  
And counts it summer all the day.

### Detective Dick;

OR,

### THE HERO IN RAGS.

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

AUTHOR OF "WILLFUL WILL," "NOBODY'S BOY," ETC., ETC.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### A WARM INTERVIEW.

"Luck! You kin bet your bottom dime on that. I've had a streak just as big as the side of a mountain."  
"Hold your horses a bit, Dick. Good luck can keep sweet till we're ready to use it. It's bad luck that goes sour. I never talk business on an empty pipe."  
The speaker—a middle-aged man, with thick, grizzled whiskers, and a face as rough as a chestnut-burr—produced a handsome meerschaum from his pocket, and proceeded deliberately to charge it with tobacco.  
Dick sat, with a grim smile on his young face, curiously watching this process.  
The pipe lit, his companion took two or three long whiffs, sending the smoke curling through the air, his face full of deep satisfaction.  
"There. That's what I call comfort," he said, taking the pipe from his mouth to speak. "Now, Dick, you can unload."  
"Ain't in no hurry 'bout that," said Dick, grimly. "Guess my luck'll keep sweet awhile longer."  
"What do you mean, you blowed young rag doct'?" growled the other.  
"Somehow I can't never talk business till I've had a puff," answered the boy, deliberately producing from somewhere in his old apparel a half-smoked cigar. "S'pose you favor your uncle with a light."  
The man looked half-angry for a moment; then, with a short laugh, he handed Dick his pipe.  
Dick proceeded, with great nonchalance, to light his stump of a cigar, and while doing so it will be a good time to introduce him to the reader.  
He was a short, well-set boy, of apparently some sixteen years of age, though there was the worldly wisdom of a man in his not overly clean face. Dick laid no claims to beauty or countenance, but he had all the keenness of the genuine street-boy. His dress was a conglomerate, seemingly made up of stray bits of cast-off clothing, and long since worn into rags. A coat, which had been made for a taller person, came down nearly to his heels, while a limp, rough-and-ready hat was set as jauntily over one ear as if Dick was proud of its possession.  
"There," exclaimed Dick, handing back the pipe. "That's what I call comfort." He put his heels on the table, tilted back his chair to a dangerous angle, and poured out smoke from his lips till his head seemed enveloped in a cloud.  
"Well, if you ain't a cool coon," declared the man, with a look of some admiration. "If he ain't got the impudence of old Nick himself, then I'll rent out my head for lodgings."  
"Dunno who you'd git to rent sich an empty old barn of a place as that," was Dick's provoking retort.  
"I'll set on you after awhile, and mash you sure as my name's Ned Hogan," with a touch of spleen. "You'd best dry up while your skin's whole. There's enough of this slack, now; let's hear what you've got to say."  
Dick bent his eyes meditatively on the ceiling while he ejected a ring of smoke from his lips.  
"What's your favorite brand of cigars?" he asked, innocently, as if he had not heard Hogan's question.  
"Do you want me to smother you?" cried the latter, putting up his sleeves with grim meaning.  
"I don't smoke none but Concha de Figaro," continued Dick, with sublime disregard of Hogan's threat. "This is a genuine Concher. Just smell that flavor if you want rose-water and cognac rolled into one and ironed out flat. Why, it's enough to make a man forget his grandmother."  
"What gutter do you patronize for your Conchers now?" asked Hogan, taking the pipe from his lips.  
"That's an out-and-out Continental. Guv



Dick bent his eyes meditatively on the ceiling while he ejected a ring of smoke from his lips.

me by a young buck for holding his boss. I alters take pay in cigars—and nickels. Concher, you see, is the poetry of my business. But nickels is necessary.  
Hogan set watching the boy as if uncertain just what to make of him. It was evident enough that threats were waste words with Dick. The latter smoked on in silence for a few minutes, looking his nettled comrade quietly in the face. Then, laying the scant remnant of his cigar on the table, he slowly let down his chair from its dangerous angle.  
"Now s'pose we come to biz," said Dick, setting his hat over the other ear, and buttoning one button of his coat.  
"I'm agreeable."  
Hogan had had it long ago if you hadn't hauled me up so short with your chocolate-colored old pipe," with a comical grimace.  
"Did you see Harris?"  
"I've got a riddle 'us whin that's the job I took in," and Dick fastened another button with great dignity. "When you find Dick Darling go back on his jobs you kin git out your mud-scrubbers and scrub the bottom for him. I'm one of the kind that kin bear death but not disgrace."  
"Yer a blamed long-winded, short-haired, knock-kneed, impudent young son of a ship's monkey," growled Hogan, wrathfully. "And if you don't come to the point soon there'll be a death in the Darling family, without the trouble of your drowning yourself."  
Ned Hogan raised his short, sturdy figure from his chair, and laid down his pipe, as if this were the first movement toward putting his threat in execution.  
"Thank you. Don't keef if I do, long as my Concher's smoked out," said Dick, quickly picking up the pipe and inserting it between his lips.  
"There alters was something 'bout a genuine meerschaum that I liked."  
He puffed away in seeming unconsciousness of the wrathful attitude of his companion, who stood as if quite overcome by this sublimity of impudence. Finally, with a short, savage laugh, he sunk again into his chair, exclaiming:  
"I'll be shot if I don't believe that boy would stop to argy the pint if there was a pile-driver comin' down on his head. Come, Dick, now, what did Harris say?"  
"Oh! he wasted a good many parts of speech tryin' to argy into me that boys' tongues were only made for ornament; which, in course, didn't stand to reason. He giv me a letter, though, which I guess will come to the heel of it quicker nor I kin."  
Dick laid down the pipe, which Hogan made haste to appropriate. Then followed a general unbuttoning and diving into multifarious pockets, with which Dick's apparel seemed plentifully supplied. A general assortment of boys' pocket merchandise adorned one corner of the table as Dick emptied pocket after pocket in his search.  
"Well, if it don't beat bugs and butterflies!" he exclaimed, indignantly. "I know I sunk it in one of them pockets; and there ain't a pick-pocket this side of Hong Kong could find a thing after it's once buried in my pockets. Can't find it myself half the time."  
"If you've lost it I'll be hanged if I won't grind you into soap-fat!" roared Hogan.  
"Wish I'd got it insured. Mought as well made something on it," muttered Dick, as he continued his investigation. "Think I'll take out a policy on everything that goes later my pockets arter this. Mought break up the insurance companies, though."  
Dick took off his hat to scratch his head for an idea to help him out of the difficulty, when out dropped the missing letter, falling on the floor at Hogan's feet.  
Dick looked down on it with an odd contortion of countenance.  
"I'll sell my pet cat, if there ain't some sleight-of-hand about this," he protested, ruefully. "I seed old Signor Blitz across the street. Bet he had a hand in puttin' that letter in my hat. Sich things don't do themselves." Hogan paid little attention to the boy's mut-

terings, as he picked up the letter and tore it open, evidently anxious to learn its contents.  
Dick moved to the other side of the table, as if for defense against the gathering storm that showed itself in Hogan's countenance, and stood slyly eying the strongly-marked face of the man, as his eyes ran down the epistle.  
There were mutterings and grumblings as of distant thunder, as he continued to read. Finally, with a sudden outburst of wrath, he slapped the letter violently down upon the table, a prodigious oath breaking from his lips like that of a peal of the thunder which makes the roof rattle and the dishes dance.  
"May I be cantankerously smashed into tin sixpences, if this don't take the biggest rag off the littlest bush that ever I run across!" he ejaculated. "Oh! if you ain't a genius for business," shaking his list at Dick. "Lucky for you that the table's between us, if you think anything of your bones."  
"What's wrong?" asked Dick, with childlike innocence of manner.  
"What's wrong?" echoed Hogan, loudly. Then, suddenly lowering his voice, he asked: "Can you read?"  
"Kin I read?" repeated Dick, indignantly. "Kin a duck swim! Kin a fox eat grapes? I'd be a purty graduate of the No. 1 Keystone primary if I hadn't blisted in that much eddication. Wonder if he takes me for a fresh emigrant?"  
"Read that, then, and out loud. I want to see how it strikes you."  
"All O.K., uncle," assented Dick, confidently, buttoning up his coat till he looked like a trusted turkey. "Don't find me goin' back on literature."  
He crammed his hat down savagely on his head, spread the sheet of paper before him, shut his right eye and scratched his left ear, as if these were necessary preliminaries to a dipping into literature.  
"Fierdelfy, April one, eighteen hundred and—a block," began Dick, with slow and emphatic manner. "Wonder if it ain't an April fool sell. Kinder looks like it."  
"Go on," commanded Hogan, energetically.  
"Edward Hogan, Esq. What's Esq?"  
"Go on."  
"It means 'go on,' does it? All right," said Dick, going on, with sundry interpolations of his own.  
Dick was no great success as a reader of manuscript, and it was with many a trip and stumble in his way, that he made his slow journey down the rugged pathway of the letter.  
"Bus-i-ness is bus-i-ness" (wonder if he thinks we want to be told that); "and what is worth doing at all is worth a man doing himself." (That ain't good grammar. Should have said himself.)  
Hogan sat listening, with a smile of deep meaning.  
"In what high-way or by-way of in-solence you picked up the boy you sent me I'd like to know, for I don't believe that such crooked crab-apples grow in every orchard."  
"Now who the dogs ever learned of a crooked crab-apple?" demanded Dick, looking up from the letter.  
Hogan made no answer but a grim smile.  
"As for in-trust-in any bus-i-ness of im-portance, guess big words is sold cheap in this country to such a messenger, I would as soon put my hand in a hornet's nest after honey." (That's fun. Tried it myself once. Kinder 'preciate your feelings there.)  
"Blow me if it ain't like pouring water on a duck's back," growled Hogan. "I was for enough to think there was some shame in the boy."  
Dick seated himself before proceeding, leaning back, with his heels on the table, to the great enjoyment of his literary task.  
"I asked him to tell me where you were living, and he asked me if I wanted to buy him for a donkey! (Bet he could be bought cheap just

then.) Then I re-quest-ed to know his residence, and was informed that he lived at the corner of Goose and Spruce, next door to Whale-bone alley."  
"Don't he write a slashin' hand?" queried Dick, admiringly. "Jist look at that Goose! And he dashes off 'Whalebone as if it done him good."  
"What did you tell him such stuff for?"  
"Twernt none of his bizness where I lived."  
"He next took occasion to inform me that he was first cousin to General Grant, and nephew to the Emperor of China, and cared no more for my riches than a Newfoundland dog, cared for a terrier pup." (That's very well, Mr. Harris, but you ain't put in a word of your own impudence.)  
"You seem to enjoy that letter," remarked Hogan, with a grimace.  
"It's kinder entertaining," continued Dick, "that the city I lived in wasn't fit for a respectable bootblack to emigrate to, and that it would do first rate to set up in a corner of a Philadelphia square as a specimen of a one-horse village."  
"I tell you that fetched little Harris," Dick laughed, as if the recollection was highly agreeable. "He talked a big about the City of Chester, that I couldn't help puttin' in a back-handled slap."  
"You seem to have distinguished yourself pretty generally," said Hogan.  
"I suppose these are enough if-lus-trations (don't recollect the word of his mode of conversation)" continued the reader. "I was sily enough to let him go on for an hour. (Don't know how you'd stopped him.) I certainly shall not trust important business to such a messenger. You know where I live, and have not informed me where you live. Come down and see me yourself. Yours truly,  
"H. WILSON HARRIS."  
"Short and sweet; with oceans of my impudence, and not a word of his own," and Dick spoke indignantly. "That's just like men. They think boys ain't got no souls."  
"You're a high old messenger. You ought to have a premium," said Hogan, sourly. "Do you know anything else?"  
"Only that the schooner Lucy flung the hawser on Chester pier last night."  
"The devil!" cried Hogan, rising so suddenly as to overturn his chair. "And he leaves the only bit of news worth a picayune to the last!"  
He rushed hastily from the room, followed by an irritating laugh from Dick.

#### CHAPTER II.

##### THE SINGING LESSON.

HOGAN'S hasty journey was to the telegraph office. Arrived there, however, he was not so hasty in sending his message, but spent full twenty minutes, with the aid of a pocket-dictionary, and a peculiarly cut piece of paste-board, in inditing it.  
The clerk looked at it curiously, and then up at Hogan.  
"Want this sent just as it reads?"  
"Sartin. And may be, you'd better run it over to see if it's writ out plain. Wouldn't do to get one of them words wrong."  
"H. Wilson Harris, Chester, Penna," began the clerk.  
"Chocolate, cows, corpulent, cucumbers, criminal, carter, cake, can, combine, calico."  
"Is that right? Your cypher seems to run to C's. Chocolate, cows, and corpulent cucumbers are queer specimens."  
"All correct. Hope it won't run to seed. Push her through, my friend. I expect an answer."  
It was half an hour before the answer came. It was couched in the same cypher, which seemed to give Hogan more trouble to read than it had to write.  
"Let me see," he muttered, "I told him to

keep a spare eye for the Lucy, and specially for the red-haired mate. I judge this to be: 'I have been watching, but have seen nothing.'—'cran-ber-ry,' what's that? Oh! 'suspicious.' 'Seen nothing suspicious.' 'Will keep my—' curtain concert.' What the blazes is that?"  
Hogan thumbed his book for several minutes, then ejaculated:  
"Eyes open!—Keep my eyes open! Hope you will, Harris. I am afeared, though, you'll have dust thrown in them. Wish I was down there myself, but I've got to pay my compliments to our mutual friend, Harry Spencer."  
Hogan had long since left the telegraph office, and was making his way as rapidly as a street-car could carry him to an up-town locality.  
Arrived in front of a stylish row of houses on North Eleventh street, he was met, as if by pure chance, by a plainly-dressed man, who had been lounging carelessly on the nearest corner.  
"What news?" was Hogan's first remark to this individual.  
"All serene. The bird is caged yet. Wish to Heaven he'd show a wing."  
"You are too uneasy, Tom. I hope you haven't sold your business!"  
"Do you take me for a fool, Ned Hogan?" answered Tom, angrily. "I haven't been shadowing rascals for ten years not to know the first ropes yet. Tain't for any young fox like this to run to earth under an old hound's nose."  
"Seen any signs?"  
"A rusty-looking lad, that might have been a telegraph boy, went in half an hour ago. He ain't come out since. There was a very bright-faced young lady, too, went in an hour ago. She left just before you came."  
"Bet on your having an eye for the ladies, Tom," laughed Hogan. "You can slide now. I'll take up the next watch."  
They walked carelessly on together. Hogan filling his favorite meerschaum. He took a long, delighted puff at it, and then said:  
"Be on hand at six, if nothing turns up before. I'll smoke him if he shows his nose."  
Tom walked on, and Hogan turned on his heel, stationing himself in an indolent attitude against an awning-post, and smoking diligently as his eyes rested on the houses before him.  
We will take the privilege of entering the particular house to which his attention was directed.  
From the parlor of this rather plainly-furnished residence, a half-hour or so before Hogan took up his watch, there came the tones of a remarkably sweet lady's voice, accompanying the piano, in what seemed more of an exercise than a song.  
The tones of the voice vibrated musically throughout the house, and might have stirred the dull ear of the watcher in the street had his soul been sensitive to the influence of music.  
There mingled with it now the manly tones of a fine tenor voice, while more vigorous sounds came from the piano.  
But we will intrude on this music-lesson, as it seems to be.  
The young lady whose voice is so full of bird-like sweetness is a tall, beautiful girl, very stylishly dressed, a light-haired, blue-eyed virgin, on whom the eyes of the gentleman are fixed in deep admiration.  
He is a very handsome fellow, and has about him that ease and dignity of manner which seem to be the prerogative of culture. He is dressed rather plainly, but wears his clothes with an air that gives them all the effect of stylishness.  
"That is well done, very well done," he says, approvingly. "The range of your voice has increased within the last few weeks."  
"Do you really think so?" she asked, pleased with his praise.  
"Yes; you struck that upper note clearly today. Last week you could not sound it."  
"It seemed to me as if I must have reached the roof of the house," she returned, laughingly.  
"And now I think I must go."  
"Oh, no! not yet," and he spoke appealingly.  
"I wish you to try this new song with me. It is a beautiful thing, and will just suit your voice."  
"Love Waits," reading its title, with a shrug of her shoulders. "Something sweetly sentimental, I suppose. What is love waiting for?"  
"Heaven knows. If I were a lover, now, I could tell you what I would be waiting for."  
"For a smile from the sweetest eyes under the sun," she read, looking intently at the music.  
"Let me see them," and laying his hand lightly on her arm, he peered earnestly into her face.  
"Oh! no nonsense," she exclaimed, turning quickly away. "You are a mere tease."  
"Yet the flush on her face showed that she was not quite displeased."  
Without a word he laid the music on the piano, and ran his hand softly over the air.  
"Do you think you can catch it? It is easy."  
"Sing it yourself first. I want to hear the movement."  
He sang with a great deal of feeling and power, she listening with a charmed expression as the rich tones of his voice filled the room with music. The song was deeply sentimental, and its fervent meaning thrilled in his voice.  
"She is as winsome as the summer rose; Ah! false was he that painted love's eyes blind; The stars are pale when those bright orbs unclose; Love waits no more when love's soft heart grows kind."  
His voice lowered and vibrated strangely as he came to these last lines. He seemed to feel deeply the sentiment of the song, and held on to the "Love waits no more" with a fervent insistence that thrilled the heart of his hearer with deep emotion.  
He was silent for a moment, the echoes of his voice seeming still to fill the room with music.  
"Do you like the song?" he asked, quietly.  
"Oh! indifferently," she answered.  
"Will you try it now?"  
"Not now. I thank you," coolly.  
"The lesson is ended, then," shutting down the piano with almost a bang.  
"Which lesson?" was her innocently-expressed inquiry, as her bright eyes rested a moment on his face.  
"The music-lesson," he replied, rather curtly. "I was not aware that I was teaching any other lesson."  
"Ah! true was he that painted love's eyes blind," she sang, with a laughing intonation.



She seized her music and turned toward the door. He stood irresolutely, his face flushed, his foot nervously tapping the floor.

"You shall not go till you have told me what you mean," he declared, suddenly taking her hand.

"Why, you wished me to sing it a minute ago, with a quick glance. 'I hope I caught the sentiment properly.'"

"But your paraphrase? Your change of my words?"

"Excuse me. That is one of the things no woman explains," withdrawing her hand resolutely from his grasp.

"One moment, Helen; I have dared to think—I have dared to hope—"

She stood listening with downcast eyes, and with an undefined expression on her face. She was certainly not deeply displeased.

Yet he was not destined to finish his hesitating sentence.

The door near which they stood suddenly opened, and a boy of the most unmitigated boyishness, stepped saucily into the room. It was no other than ragged, independent Dick Darling.

"Scuse me," he said, with a meaning glance from one to the other of the pair upon whom he had intruded. "S'pose maybe if I was to call ag'in, it might be more agreeable. I'll retire to a sofa in the parlor till you git through."

"Stay where you are, you wicked young rascal," cried Mr. Spencer, laughing in spite of his chagrin. "Shall I see you to the door, Miss Andrews?"

"Don't you mind me," suggested Dick, reassuringly. "I never peach, no matter what signs I see."

He seated himself on the piano-stool as they left the room.

"I'll be shot if they wasn't making love! I s'pose if I ever see'd sich fun!" a broad smile breaking over his face, as he brought his hand down for an emphatic slap upon his knee.

It fell, however, on the bank of keys of the piano, yielding such a clash of sound that the boy made a startled movement backward.

The result was an overturning of the piano-stool, and a helpless rolling of Dick over and over upon the carpet.

"I wonder what blamed kind of nitro-glycerine he keeps in that mahogany box!" he muttered, as he cautiously picked himself up. "If it often goes off that way it's what I should call a concealed deadly weapon. An' that's ag'in' the law."

Dick eyed it askance, as if not quite satisfied with its propensity.

"There he goes. In mischief before he is in the house five minutes," declared Mr. Spencer, as he paused near the front door at the sudden uproar in the parlor.

"Who is he?" asked Miss Andrews.

"Oh! a young gentleman who has deigned to take me under his care, and who calls on me at the most inconvenient moments—rags and all."

"He is ragged enough," she admitted, with a shrug. "But I am intruding on your time."

Her voice was lowered in tone, as she stood a moment, her hand on the door-knob, as if hesitating to open.

"When shall I see you again?" he asked.

"Oh! this week, I presume; if nothing happens."

"Then, may nothing happen," he returned, with a deep meaning in his voice. "Love waits for me our next lesson."

"Love waits no more," she sang, with a rosy aspect, as she quickly opened the door.

"Good-day," and she tripped hastily into the street.

His face had a very happy look, as he turned back from the door.

"I would have liked to annihilate the boy, though," he muttered.

When he entered the room Dick was standing in the middle of the floor, looking defiantly at the offending piano.

"What do you call that critter?" he asked, pointing to the instrument.

"That's a piano."

"Oh! that's a pianer, is it? Does it often go off?"

"It is a little dangerous to boys, sometimes," admitted Mr. Spencer, running his fingers lightly over the keys.

Dick listened, with a pleased ear, to the rich tones of the instrument.

"S'wore I didn't know it was bottled-up music. Got many tunes in it! Let's hear 'Hail Columbia.'"

Mr. Spencer ran over the air requested, to the infinite delight of his hearer.

"Well, that beats a hand-organ holler—money and all!"

And now I want to know what made you bolt into this room without an invitation?" demanded Mr. Spencer.

"You ought to post your kitchen gals better. She told me you was here. I took that for invitation enough."

"In future you would do best to knock before entering my private room. What brings you here to-day?" He spoke a little impatiently.

"S'pose I knowed you was in here sparkling that pretty gal?" and Dick buttoned his coat defiantly. "Couldn't have dragged me in with a yoke of oxen if I'd acknowledged it."

"She's a pupil of mine, Dick. I was giving her a singing-lesson."

"All right!" said Dick, going to the front window, and looking out into the street. "Is there an easy back way out of your house?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Cause there's eyes in the front mustn't see me, that's all. Do you know that this palatial mansion is shaddered?"

"Shaddered! What is that?"

"Watched," explained Dick, mysteriously. "There's eyes on you that you won't easy fling off. Can't tell no more, but just you beware."

"And whatever turns up don't use my name."

"All right," said Mr. Spencer, laughing. "I will be faithful to you to the death; and will avoid all red-headed men. This way, Dick."

In a few minutes more Dick was treading his way through back alleys, out of that neighborhood.

In a very short time after, Mr. Spencer left the house, and walked quickly down the street.

He cast a sharp glance around, but saw nothing more suspicious than a thickest man leaning against a post, and smoking a meerschaum.

## CHAPTER III.

## DICK GOES INTO BUSINESS.

Two gentlemen were seated in earnest conversation near the front window of a hotel room overlooking Arch street, Philadelphia.

One of them, a large, full-faced man, sat with his feet on the window-sill, in a remarkably easy attitude. The other was a small, delicately-framed man, who seemed to be greatly annoyed by some circumstance.

"Do you know, my dear boy, that we have so far been bamboozled? That's just the word for it—bamboozled," remarked the large man, with an ease that was not shared by his companion.

"A new ten-dollar issue on the market. The Pawkusset bank. It's deuced provoking," declared the small man. "And after six months' work we haven't the shadow of a clue."

"I'll tell you, it will come," protested the other, easily. "We have set things working, you know."

"Working against us, I fear," was the bitter reply. "We have just put them on their guard. The mystery grows deeper every move we make."

"Not a bit, my lad," declared the large man, unconcernedly. "We knew nothing then, and we know no more now. That is what I call *status quo*. We will strike daylight yet, don't fear that."

"Well, if you ain't the confoundest, easiest-going, most unsatisfactory specimen of a private detective that I ever ran across then I'll sell out," cried the small man, impatiently. "I believe if an earthquake were to rattle the house to pieces it wouldn't get a shake out of you."

"I don't know," was the quiet rejoinder. "The chills and fever tried it once. I was harder to shake than it was, though, so I shook it off. But, what is the good of worrying? You can't butter your parsnips by grumbling at your ill luck."

"I have never been so long in the dark in any case I ever took on in my life," said the testy gentleman. "And we are looked to do something. Here is a gang of counterfeiters flooding the country with bad money under the very noses of the Government detectives. There is not a month but that some new issue comes out. And it is no bungling work, I tell you. They are first-rate mechanics, and the keenest fellows I ever saw at hiding their tracks and their work."

"Every dog has his day," declared the other, in his easy manner. "Let them alone. Give them rope. They will hang themselves yet. We have made ourselves somewhat too visible. We had better get back into the shadow and hide our hands. It sometimes pays to take to earth and only use your eyes."

"Yes, and let Pinkerton's men step in and take the game out of our bag," was the impatient reply.

"How would it sound to say that Will Frazer and Jack Bounce, the noted Secret Service officers, worked for half a year on a blind trail and then let themselves be pinked by Pinkerton. I shouldn't like to see that in print."

"Well, Jack Bounce, for one, don't care a fig," replied the large man, indolently shifting his feet. "If it comes to a free race between the detectives the devil take the hindmost, that's my programme. But when I trouble myself about anything less than that, I'm more for dinner, or such like capital crimes, you can tell me of it."

"You are a regular philosopher, Jack," confessed his comrade. "I don't know, though, that it makes you any worse at your business. I suppose there is too much sin about me. My game leaks out. I don't know when I was ever more ashamed of myself than about something that happened to-day."

"Ah! Let's hear it," asked Jack.

"Do you know that I was asked by an impudent young rascal in full street uniform—a cast-off coat, and rags for breeches. He had my name pat, and my vocation, too, it seems. And that wasn't all. He had smelt our business here, and was going to put us on some wonderful track for only ten dollars. I was more inclined to give the young villain ten kicks. I never knew before that I carried my business in my face."

Before he had got half through Jack Bounce's feet were on the floor, and he was eying his comrade steadily.

"I didn't know that you valued ten dollars so highly."

"You know it wasn't the dollars," was the vexed rejoinder. "You were out of temper, Will, and haven't got back to it yet; or you wouldn't have let that boy off so easily."

"You think, then, that he hadn't smelt my business?"

"I know you are not a fool. It don't do to shunt any door in our own faces. You can take my word for it that it was not from you that the boy learned all that. He may have had the very clue that has been baffling us. I should like to see him."

"I think I should know him again," with a humility that showed that he felt the force of this reproach.

"Then you had best keep your eyes open for him," declared Jack, in decided accents. "That spring must be pumped dry."

"Will's reply was a sudden leap to his feet and rush to the window."

"There he is now!" he cried.

"And sees you," added Jack. "See, he is coming into the hotel. He has not given it up yet."

"Had I best go down and look him up?"

"Wait, wait," ordered Jack. "You will never learn the virtues of waiting. If he knows us he will find us."

"Well, I wash my hands of the young villain. You can manage him."

A few minutes passed in silent waiting. Then Jack Bounce's policy was confirmed by a loud knock at the door.

"Come in!" he cried, resuming his easy attitude.

The door opened and in walked Dick Darling, his coat, as usual, dragging at his heels, and his face innocent of fresh water.

"Morning, gentlemen!"

"Come here, boy, and let's have a good look at you," called out Jack. "Was that coat made to order?"

"I dunno that I'm playin' side-show for a circus," retorted Dick, sturdily. "An' if you don't like my ulster maybe you'd buy it at half-price and give me another."

"I'm not in that line of business," laughing. "Come up here so I can see you. What is your name?"

"Dick Darling, or Darling Dick. I'm called both ways."

"Anything that you do for a living?"

and to establish himself in the exact attitude of his questioner, with his feet in an adjoining window, and his chair tilted back.

"Can talk bizness a good deal better when I'm comfortable," he explained. "Don't pay to wait for invitations nowadays."

"Well, if he ain't cool enough to freeze hot water, I'll sell out," was Frazer's expressed opinion.

"Now out with it, Dick," commanded Jack Bounce, in an amused tone. "What business have you in hand to-day?"

"I've got up all retail lines. I'm arter that set of counterfeits that's making things howl in the money market, and that's laughin' in their sleeves at Pinkerton's and the Secret Service."

"What do you know about it?" asked Bounce, his eye falling to the floor in his surprise.

"I know that Will Frazer and Jack Bounce, two of Uncle Sam's best men, have been smellin' round for months, and haven't found a bad egg in the basket yet. I know that Ned Hogan and his pals think they've got a scent, which s'wore, work up a dime. And, finally, I've got a stupid notion in my head that I see an openin' into the den of rascals."

"Ah! and what is your opening?"

"I wish you'd take a close look at my eyes, Mr. Jack Bounce, and see the color of them. If you find any green there then buy me cheap, that's all."

"Which means that you don't intend to tell me what you mean?"

"Which means," answered Dick, "that I'm on the make. I know there's money in this. I'm for my sheer, that's all. Don't calculate to spend my life carting around an ulster that don't fit. I'm in for makin' my fortune, and goin' into fashion, and sich."

"What do you want of this fellow, Will?" asked Bounce, turning to his companion.

"I think he will never die from impudence striking in," Will answered. "He's took it, like the small-pox, on the surface."

"Maybe you and me can cry quits," retorted Dick, defiantly. "You took me for a sell yesterday; but I've a notion you sold yourself. Now I'll give Mr. Bounce his chance. If he don't take—why, me and Ned Hogan knows one another; that's a word to the wise."

"What do you want, Dick?" asked Bounce, in a tone of amusement.

"I want ten dollars now, to begin on. And I want to be let alone. Them's two things. I won't promise that'll be my last draw. It takes rhino to push these things through. If I have to shut my office, I've got to be floated awhile in cash."

"Where is your office, Dick?"

"The last one I opened was on a toadstool seat in Independence Square," confessed Dick, with a sigh. "Maybe I can get a good deal of business. I'm feared, though, it'll be hard to collect the rent."

"And what is our security for our ten dollars?"

"My face," looking Jack squarely in the eye. "If you can't see ten dollars' worth of honesty there, then we'll cry quits."

Dick rose from his chair and began buttoning his coat, his habitual action when he meant business.

"Of course I'll be sheer and sheer alike, in rewards, profits, and sich," he added, pausing a moment. "Do you take? If you do, fork over the needful. If you don't, why, don't be long about sayin' it."

"By the point, Dick, eh?" said Jack, laughing. "Come, my lad, I shouldn't wonder if you did smell a rat somewhere. Guess I won't mind riskin' a ten on your personal security."

"He took a bank-note from his pocket-book, and handed it to the boy in his easy, careless manner."

Dick examined it with the eye of a connoisseur.

"Well, do you think it crooked, eh?"

"I've got a hunch it's one of the new edition," said Dick, honestly. "I don't trust detectives too far; and you're a bit green to trust a street vagrant like me."

Jack Bounce laughed heartily with an amusement which was not shared by his companion.

"I can scent honesty in the air, my boy," admitted Jack. "That is part of my business. And shrewdness, too. That is in your face, or I wouldn't risk on your honesty alone. I think I can venture as high as a fifty on the chance of your working your scheme."

"I dunno," deprecated Dick, with a close setting of the lips. "You might lose your cash. I've only got a pin-hole to see through, so far, but I've a notion that I can see a mighty long ways through it; and at the end of the pile of rags I'll telegraph when I want your help."

"In person or by letter?" asked Will Frazer, sarcastically.

"By an underground wire of my own. Guess I'll have to wait till to-day. I'll vamoose now till I want a few more of the dingbats."

With a dignity that would have done him credit in a stage tragedy, Dick stalked from the room, not deigning a glance behind him.

"I think not," unconcernedly. "And I've just backed my opinion with an X."

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE SELLER SOLD.

THE boy had designs on the ten-dollar bill which had hardly been contemplated by the giver. His next appearance is in a South street second-hand clothing establishment, surrounded by a plentiful array of 'old clo', which had his attention attracted, so far as their sins of the body would admit.

The proprietor, a cadaverous-looking gentleman, whose well-hooked nose seemed the larger portion of him, came bustling forward to where Dick sat placidly himself first on his shins, and was surveying the stock in trade with the eye of a critic.

"What can I do for my young friend to-day?" asked the storekeeper, with a habitual rubbing of his hands.

"I dunno when I interduced you 'mong my friends," returned Dick, with a look of serene haughtiness. "Just you keep your distance, Solomon. I didn't come here to be talked to death."

The proprietor drew back, as if abashed by Dick's rebuff. The latter continued his survey of the stock, his nose superciliously in the air.

"Got any other room, where you keep rag-lans and cutaways and sich?" asked Dick.

"I've got a beautiful assortment here," the Jew declared, eagerly. "I know I can fit you out and make a regular little gentleman of you. What shall I show you?"

"Show me your coat-tails, if you're goin' on this way," answered Dick, disgustedly. "Heaven take the *gentleman* that could be made of your polished-up old rags. Give us a squirt at that short-tailed beaver."

The dealer brought down the coat indicated, handing it with a look of intense admiration.

"What an eye the lad has!" ejaculated "Old Clo". "He has hit on the very finest piece of English cloth in my store, at first glance."

"Sure of that, Solomon?"

"Yes. Just look at the nap of that! And see how it is made. Look at that buttonhole!"

"I've got it ag'in," ordered Dick. "I ain't buying naps and buttonholes."

"But, my dear friend—"

"Cheese all that, old boy! You're a good deal too fond of talk. Never send a feller so chockin' up of blow. Just let me alone. I'm doin' my own buyin'."

The storekeeper looked as if he would like to give Dick the benefit of his boot and an open door. But the boy, with exasperating indifference, continued his critical survey, and examined and tried on coat after coat with a fastidious taste that quite disgusted the salesman.

"I don't think I have anything to please you," decided the latter, at length.

"Well, it makes blamed little difference what you think," rejoined Dick, independently. "I'm

here to do the thinkin'. What do you wait for this store-up of rag, now?"

"Dick had on a coat the very reverse of the one he usually wore. The tails reached but little beyond his waist, and it looked like a roundabout which had undergone a partial process of development into a frock-coat."

"Rag!" screamed the Hebrew. "If he ain't the funniest fellow. Best French cloth, and very little worn, and to call it a rag! Why, just look at that gloss! And it is the latest style."

"Yes, I see that gloss," was Dick's curt answer. "Looks as if the owner had spent his time polishin' lamp-posts. Can't say that I keep much for style."

Dick had dislocated his neck trying to twist his head around to get an idea of the set of the coat in the back.

"Come here. This way. To the glass," suggested the Jew, hustling Dick eagerly before a very small square of mirror.

"How much is a feller 'spected to see of hisself 'Dance in that hinesst?" asked Dick, impatiently, after vainly endeavoring to see from his waist to his shoulder.

"Let me hold it for you," said the Jew, eagerly. "It's a beautiful fit—beautiful! See how smooth it sets in the back. Such an elegant fit!"

Dick got his head round over his left shoulder, but failed to see the wrinkles which the Jew was industriously smoothing out.

"Mought pass if the price was agree'ble. What's the plunder?"

"That coat ought to bring not a penny less than ten dollars, and dog-cheap at that, for such a piece of cloth."

"Cheap at that, eh? What price mought it be dear at?" asked Dick, sarcastically.

The Jew held up his hands with a sickly smile.

"Well, if he ain't a droll one!" he exclaimed. "Take a squirt at that bit of broadcloth, Solomon, and Dick picked up his own old coat."

"Jest look at that elegant garment. Observe the buttonholes, and the nap. Git your optical organs on the style. See here, Sol, I'll make a trade with you. What'll you give to boot?"

"Don't run for that dilapidated old—"

"What! that coat down now. It's stuck by me through sun and rain. You mought be glad to git a faithful old piece of broadcloth like that. It only wants some scourin', and a stitch or two."

The Jew examined it all over with the eye of an artist.

"Give me five dollars, and I'll trade," he said, at length.

"Guv you five'dimonds!" answered Dick, contemptuously. "Make it even up and I'm your man; and you've got a dead bargain."

"What's the matter, maybe? Maybe I can't get this old sack!" exclaimed the Jew. "Do you think I'm breakin' up business? Five dollars boot is a ruinous sacrifice."

"Here you are, Sol," and Dick pulled out a two-dollar bill. "Say the word, on the nail, quick, as gressed lightning! Got 'em on hand, and can't stand here palaverin' with you."

"Four dollars. And that's a great fall," responded the Jew, decidedly.

"Here's your old antiquity then," cried Dick, hastily stripping off the coat. "Hand over my Japanese broadcloth."

"Make it three," conceded the Jew, as he saw Dick walking briskly to the door.

"Two. And that's the last word," responded Dick, decidedly, as he emerged into the street.

"Come back," growled the Jew. "I can't bear to see you leave such an elegant fit behind you. But, I'll be ruined entirely if I make many such sales."

"Oh, yes! you're a generous-hearted old cuss," and Dick resumed the coat, and passed over his two dollars. "The city ought to make up your losses. You're a charitable old beat, you are."

And with a smile of contempt Dick left the store, proud at heart of his new attire.

"Well, if I ain't done the Jew! Didn't think old Solomon would bite at such a gudgeon as that. It's enough to make a chap feel proud he's a human, to sell that skinny old penny-squeezer. I feel just one foot higher."

And laughing repeatedly to himself at thought of his great bargain Dick progressed through the classic precincts of South street, entering a store after store, and picking up new cheap articles of apparel at ruinous prices, until he emerged like a butterfly in spring array, and minus five dollars in pocket.

"Guess I'm gay and lively now. Fine feathers make fine birds."

Disposing of what remained of his old suit, Dick took his way to the vicinity of a large stationery establishment on Chestnut street above Eighth.

Here he was seized with a desperate attack of lounging, and spent several hours with no other apparent purpose than to display himself in his new spring suit to the fashionable denizens of that locality.

Yet it might have been noticed that he paid his regards to the store in question so closely that not a soul entered it without passing under the ordeal of his eyes. Not till the store closed for the night did Dick cease his task of espionage.

The next morning found him on his post again, and though hour after hour passed he never strayed beyond easy eye-shot of the paper-selling establishment.

Yet Dick was not without his sources of entertainment. One of these was the pulling of a torn envelope from his pocket, and looking through the paper toward the sun.

He always returned it to his pocket with the remark:

"There's riches in that. That bit of paper is my end of the trail."

His other source of amusement was the thought of how he had done the Jew.

"Just to think of old Sol tradin' off an elegant coat like this for my old resident!"

It seemed as if he could never think of his shrewdness without breaking into a fit of laughter. Passers-by turned in startled surprise at Dick's sudden explosions of merriment, only to see him surveying his new coat with vast complacency.

"No use talkin'! I'm great on a bargain. Wish my chap would come. It's past dinner-time and I'm gettin' holler."

His wish was speedily gratified by the entrance of a person to the stationery-store whose appearance gave Dick a sudden start. In a minute he was across the street, and had been detained from restoring herself to him by either force or specious reasoning on St. Felix's part. St. Felix knew it would go bitterly hard with him, while he also knew that, to himself, the loss of Jocelyne was really a personal blow.

He realized, keenly, that the action must be prompt. He was determined to find her, dead or alive, and he had satisfied himself she had not destroyed herself upon the premises.

His first act was to examine her wardrobe, which showed conclusively the fact that Jocelyne had not gone prepared for a long journey.

Her pocket-book was in her dressing-case drawer, her hat and shawl in her wardrobe, she had even taken no shoes, wearing her slippers, and the silver-backed comb with which she fastened up her hair, was on her toilette-table, just as when she had removed it to the night.

Undoubtedly her going had been unpremeditated, probably caused by the offer of love he had made her.



And Belle did not care at all. While Harry was so glad to break up the intimacy between his true-hearted little wife and her quondam friend, that he did not in the least begrudge the seventy-five dollars' worth of bitter experience.







## MEMNON.

BY A. W. BELLAW.

All night the throbbing of the oars  
And measures of the Osirian song  
Flowed through our half-sleep; touched our  
dreams  
As softly sped our galley along.  
All night the warm air, welcome-sweet,  
And lotus laden from the land  
Worried the taper a waning flame;  
And we were kings in a kingdom grand.  
We woke. Low on the Libyan plain  
The white star and the withering moon  
Told morning. Down the dusky tide  
Stood Memnon waiting with his tune.  
Ah, how we hastened to be there  
In hour to hear it! How we sped  
By dreaming temple, frowning sphinx,  
And mountain tenebments of the dead!  
Lightly we leapt the throng among  
Of men and priests all prone in prayer,  
Nor ran a ripple on the Nile  
Under the silence of the air.  
Nor stirred the lilies' snowy flakes  
About the marge, nor on the shore  
Shook the red poppy, and far off  
The very fields to wave before.  
From sacred censens of the priests  
The smoking incense climbed and wreathed  
Round those mysterious lips of stone  
To woo the music to be breathed.  
My mate and I put off our crowns,  
Kneeling, since kings must kneel in grace,  
Then gleamed the ray in air above  
That, falling, dashed it full in face.  
Then all the lilies lengthened out  
Their pale, pure pennons, and the tone  
Mounted through myriad heavens of sound  
To meet the morning on its throne.  
Then down it died in heart of earth,  
And chants of priests and songs of men  
Did follow loud and linger long,  
And mate our galley moved again.

## What Lily Accepted.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

THE four of them were as unlike as could well be imagined, and as they sat in earnest conference in Mrs. Dalzell's little parlor, they represented vastly different styles and characteristics.

Mrs. Dalzell, pale, faded, woful and wearied-looking, and looking so perfectly the proud lady she had always been—proud, despite the plainness of her little house, and the shabbiness of her widow's weeds.

Miriam Dalzell, her eldest daughter, as beautiful as a dream, with her exquisite Greek features, and a complexion like unsmudged snow, with her magnificent black eyes that always were beautiful, whether languid and dreamy, or haughtily questioning, with her wealth of blue-black hair that crowned her like a coronet.

She had always been regarded as a beauty, and had always been the reigning belle in the town where they lived. But now, when Mr. Dalzell's death had been the cause of their being obliged to leave their pleasant home, and occupy a suite of apartments, when they suddenly discovered that instead of a large, ample income, they would be obliged to use the closest economy to at all manage on the pitiable little sum that was left them; then Miriam's bellefied fled from her, and she took her beauty and her grace, and her high-toned elegant tastes, and her hauteur with her into an obscurity that was agonizing to be endured.

Then, sitting a little apart from either mother or sister, was Lily, Mrs. Dalzell's youngest child—Lily, as unlike her sister as it was possible for them to be—unless was excepted the vein of pride that ran in all the Dalzells, but which, in Lily's case, was of a different quality from Miriam's—a quality that, while in Miriam it made her excessively haughty and exclusive and reticent and vain, in Lily was dignity and strict womanly truthfulness, and elevation of character.

No one ever thought of calling Lily pretty—she was too slight, too petite; she was neither blonde nor brunette, therefore was not noticeable for personal characteristics. Her complexion was fair, and soft as rose petals, her eyes were tenderly gray, intelligent, amiable and frank in their expression, and her hair was of chestnut brown.

But her mouth was exquisite—so girlishly lovely, with its proudly curved lips, red as a spray of moistened coral, with even milk-white teeth, showing becomingly when she laughed, and with a distracting dimple in her left cheek.

The fourth of this quartette was Mrs. Dalzell's brother—Uncle Hiram, who had been very averse to his sister's marriage with Courtney Dalzell, and who had never seen or communicated with his sister during all the years of her married life, until, when Mr. Dalzell had died, he had sent word to know if he could be of any service to his sister or her children.

Then, knowing her brother was immensely rich, and perfectly able to do great things for either of her girls, or both; for that matter, Mrs. Dalzell had written accepting his proffer, with large hopes based on his coming.

And he had come, and had seen to the settlement of his brother-in-law's affairs, and now, that the widow and her two daughters were settled down in their comfortable, plain little suite of rooms, and Uncle Hiram Wingate was to return home on the next day to New York, the final family talk was at hand, introduced by Mrs. Dalzell herself.

"And now, Hiram, what about the girls?"

"Yes—about the girls. I've been thinking it over considerably, and I've come to three conclusions, any one of which I will agree to put into effect."

Miriam dropped her long-lashed lids and her beautiful eyes, for Uncle Hiram looked directly at her, and, in spite of herself, her heart throbbled as she thought perhaps he had decided to make her his heiress! Why not, surely?

Uncle Hiram went on, succinctly:

"Of course I take it that you girls, between you, intend to let your mother have an easy life of it. At any rate, between you, you ought to be well able to take care of her now when she is getting along in years and further enfeebled by trouble. Miriam, you endorse that?"

And Miriam, with magnificent visions of future elegance for herself, out of which she should supply her mother, assented, in her lovely, graceful way.

"Good. Now, first of my suggestions is, that Miriam take a position I can get for her—right here at home, too—salsalady in one of your first-class drygoods stores."

Had a thunder-bolt fallen at Miriam's feet she could have been hardly less startled.

"I go behind a counter and sell—goods! Oh, Uncle Hiram!"

Her delicate ivory cheeks flushed painfully.

"And why not—yes?"

Miriam looked at her mother, who compressed her lips—perhaps partly from a good intention to keep down her indignation that such

an offer should be made to her queenly, beautiful daughter, who had never done a day's work in her life—perhaps because of her offended pride.

"I hardly think Miriam suited to such occupation, Hiram. She has been brought up like a lady, you must remember."

Uncle Hiram frowned.

"Then I am to understand that your theory is that to earn one's living decently and honestly is to be—not a lady?"

Mrs. Dalzell fluttered her pale, thin hands, as if torn by her conflicting desires to maintain her dignity and yet not affront this rich brother of hers who might do such glorious things if he only would.

"I really think you should not blame Miriam, Hiram. You must remember she has been educated with a view of something better in life than the drudgery of working for wages. Her manner and appearance protest against it."

Uncle Hiram gave almost a grunt, so emphatically he aspirated "humph!"

"Then I am very sure she wouldn't do at all for the two other positions I have in mind—neither of which are so tempting to the average female mind as waiting in a store. Lily, my dear, I think I had better direct my suggestions to you."

Lily laid down a strip of ruffling her deft fingers were foreworn, and drew her low-hung skirt nearer her uncle's knees, and listened for what he should propose.

He looked down at her kindly, almost tenderly—this little niece who was so like the Wingates that it was difficult for him to realize she was a Dalzell, and who had—somehow—taken the hold on his affections that Miriam had so desired for herself—that Lily herself had no idea she had accomplished.

"Well, little gray-eyes, if you are not ashamed of earning your own living, I can give you your choice of two situations. One, is that of assistant forewoman in the shirt-factory on Edgemoor street, and the other—well, I suppose your sister and your mother will regard it as disgracefully menial—but, if you ask my opinion, I should say it was the best offer of the three. It is that of a sort of companion and—well—assistant to an elderly lady."

Miriam gave a little refined cry of horror. Mrs. Dalzell held up her hands in dismay, while both spoke simultaneously.

"Hiram, how can you?"

"Oh, Uncle Hiram!"

While Lily kept her bright eyes on his face.

"Go on, uncle, please. I assure you, that the latter is the best position, and if you will tell me further about it, and think I could fill it—I will take it."

Uncle Hiram's face relaxed into a beaming smile.

"Sensible girl—I see there's Wingate stuff in you."

Mrs. Dalzell sent a horrified glance across the room to her.

"Lily! Is it possible?"

Miriam's voice rose in emphatic indignation.

"Lily Dalzell!"

Uncle Hiram nodded approvingly.

"Let her alone; she's right. It will be a good place for her, where her duties will not be too heavy, and her wages good—twenty dollars a month. I know the old lady, and I'll guarantee she'll be kind. Well, Lily—what do you say to it? Shall it be honest independence or—rubbing on as you've been doing?"

"I'll go, gladly, Uncle Hiram. I am not ashamed to work for my living, and, besides, only think how much help my wages will be here at home. I have enough clothes to last me, mamma, for several months at least, and I will send you nearly all I get. Only think, mamma, how nice it will be for you!"

Lily's cheeks were glowing and her gray eyes deepening almost to black.

"You're the sort, Lily! Now, can you be up and off early in the morning? Because, if you'll take the same train with me, I'll see you safe in your new place and introduce you to Mrs. Marion—that's her name."

Of course it was all settled that evening that Lily should go—or rather Lily settled it herself, for Mrs. Dalzell and Miriam did little else, after Uncle Hiram had gone to his hotel, but bemoan Lily's want of pride, and berate Uncle Wingate's disgusting stinginess.

"To think he should dare offer to put you in such positions, when he himself rolls in riches. The stingy—curmudgeon, if I may say it!"

And Miriam's beautiful eyes grew moist with tears as she echoed her mother's bitter invective.

"The idea of my standing behind Ferguson's counter!"

But, Lily held her peace and packed her little trunk. And the next morning, bright and early, was off to her new untrodden position.

It was late in the afternoon when the carriage Uncle Hiram had taken for them at the depot stopped before an imposing brown-stone front mansion, on a wide, aristocratic-looking avenue.

Lily looked up at the rows of plate-glass windows, hung with lace draperies, at the elegant boxes of flowers inside them, at the large square vestibule paved with blocks of colored marble, at the massive inner doors of walnut, with glass panels draped with lace, with huge silver knobs, and a feeling almost of awe came over her.

"Oh, Uncle Hiram, Mrs. Marion does not live here? I'll never be able to suit her—never in the world."

Uncle Hiram smiled encouragingly as he led her up the flight of brown-stone steps.

"You'll find Mrs. Marion very easy to get along with, indeed. Ah, Titus; just show us in the reception-room, will you, and tell your mistress we're here?"

For a tall, liveried footman had opened the door and bowed to Mr. Wingate respectfully.

It was a perfect little boudoir of a room into which Lily was ushered—an octagonal room, with windows draped in blue satin and lace alternation, with a blue and white velvet carpet on the floor, and furniture so odd and magnificent that Lily wondered if it was for actual use.

"Oh, Uncle Hiram, it's just like fairyland, isn't it?"

Her delighted, awe-struck whisper amused him, and he was laughing to his heart's content when a stout, comfortable, elderly lady came in the room, with lovely gray puffs of hair, and wearing a beautiful stately pearl silk dress.

"Hiram, my dear! I am so glad you're back again! And this is one of poor Mary's girls, is it?"

"Marion, my dear, I am glad to be home. Yes, this is Lily Dalzell, our niece. Lily, kiss your auntie, my dear!"

And, bewildered, Lily obeyed, while Uncle Hiram laughed and explained it all.

"You see I was determined I'd bring one of you home, and Marion and I arranged the little test before I went. We earned our money by hard work and economy, and we didn't want anybody to enjoy it who was too fine to follow our example. So you see, Lily, my dear, the 'situation' is a pretty fair one, after all, eh? Twenty dollars a month to spend for

candy, if you choose, and all the fine things you want, and your carriage to ride in, and your summers at Newport and a trip to Europe occasionally. Eh, Lily? You'll consent to be our adopted daughter, and come into all we've got, after we die?"

And Miriam Dalzell was nearly insane with jealousy and regret at little Lily's good fortune, while Lily herself is happy as the day is long, and for her sake, Uncle Wingate is very good to her mother and sister, who visit her at intervals, but to whom Lily will never again go except very rarely.

For she is the light of the old eyes, whose home she makes so radiant with her presence.

## FAREWELL.

BY HENRY MAXWELL.

"Farewell!" The word last spoken  
By parting friends—the token  
That friendship's ties are broken!  
Fare thee well!

"Farewell!" 'Tis not of meeting  
That it speaks! no note of greeting  
In its sound; but all of parting  
Far away!

"Farewell!" There's naught redeeming  
In the word! It has the seeming  
Of a cloud with darkness teeming  
O'er our way!

"Farewell!" What depths of feeling  
Mocking all the soul's concealing,  
Struggle forth to their revealing,  
When we say:

"Farewell!" The word last spoken  
By parting friends—the token  
That friendship's ties are broken!  
Fare thee well!

## A Girl's Heart:

OR,

DR. TREMAINE'S WOOING.

BY RETT WINWOOD.

AUTHOR OF "THE WRONGED HEIRESS," ETC.

## CHAPTER XVI.

A WOMAN'S COQUETRY.

THAT same evening, just as the early dusk was beginning to shroud the landscape in its purplish glooms, Grace Atherton sat at her chamber window, leaning over the sill.

Her face looked flushed. She was eagerly watching and listening, with her brilliant eyes fixed upon a single spot in the shrubbery below.

The springing parted presently, and a young man stepped out into the path. He was a very handsome fellow, blonde-bearded and yellow-haired. He had a tall, well-knit figure, and the muscular arms and limbs of a young athlete.

He gazed anxiously up the path for a moment, as if expecting somebody to come down from the house to meet him, and then, dropping his head dejectedly, sprang into the screen of bushes again.

Grace had drawn back from the window soon enough to avoid being seen by him; but not before she had sharply scrutinized both form and feature.

"I am not mistaken," she muttered. "It is the same mysterious stranger who met Rachel in the garden the night when she first came to Fairlawn. He has come back in the hope of seeing her again."

Grace knitted her brow thoughtfully. She had been waiting for the last fifteen minutes for a good view of the dark figure she had seen creeping in and out the shrubbery, in the bush-garden, by the merest accident, a little while before.

When the opportunity came at last, she felt no surprise at the discovery she made. It never once occurred to her that she might be mistaken. She had seen that figure only once before, and then in the somber gloom of night; but she was sure she knew it again.

After a moment's deliberation, she rose, threw a light scarf over her head, and descended to the garden.

"I will keep tryst with your lover in your stead, for this time, my beautiful Rachel," she thought, a half-cynical smile curling her red lip. "It would be scandalous for a betrothed young lady like yourself to go about meeting strange men in all sorts of places."

She walked rapidly toward the spot where she had seen the handsome stranger. Her tread was light and noiseless as that of a spirit. As fate would have it, she met the man face to face, just as he had stepped into the path to take another observation.

He recoiled, growing very red in the face. He seemed surprised and confused at seeing a beautiful young lady standing there, looking at him with such a pretty air of assumed bewilderment.

"I beg your pardon, miss," he muttered, apologetically, raising his hat to her.

"He is superb—a perfect Apollo," thought Grace. "Rachel's infatuation no longer puzzles me."

Aloud she said, with a pretty air of blended dignity and coquetry:

"Where you going to Fairlawn?"

"No, miss," he answered, hesitatingly. "I am a trespasser on these grounds."

"Perhaps you were looking for some one?"

"No—no!"

He bowed, walked on a few steps, and then turned back again.

"I was looking for some one," he said. "Perhaps you can help me. At any rate, I wish to trust you. One so beautiful would not betray me."

She dropped her bright, dark eyes, and made answer:

"Whom do you wish to find?"

"Miss Clyde."

"Rachel!" she exclaimed, with a well-affect start.

"Yes, Rachel Clyde," he returned, eagerly.

"You know her—you are her friend?"

She nodded.

"I was sure of it. I am very anxious to see her, but for certain reasons, cannot ask for her at the house. Will you send her here to me?"

"Certainly, if you wish it."

She smiled brightly, and turned as if to go away. Then a sudden thought seemed to strike her.

"Dear me! I had forgotten!" she exclaimed, in well-acted dismay. "Rachel is out driving with Mr. Dent."

She uttered the falsehood so glibly that the young man never thought of doubting her word.

"Driving with Mr. Dent?" he echoed. "That is strange—very strange indeed."

"Do not think so."

She was laughing softly. He looked at her steadily.

"Why not?" he queried.

"Of course you know they are betrothed lovers?"

He started a little, and then burst into a loud laugh.

"Rachel and Mr. Dent lovers? No, I did not know it. Perhaps you will tell me next that oil and water have assimilated."

"You doubt my word, sir, but I have told you the truth. If they are not lovers, they ought to be, for they are to be married in less than two weeks."

"Married?"

"You seem to delight in echoing my words, sir. I really wish you would not."

Glancing up at him swiftly, she saw that he had grown ghastly pale. One of his clenched hands was uplifted, shaking wildly in the air.

"Married!" he said again. "You are trifling with me. Rachel marry that man! Ah, just heaven!"

"Why shouldn't she marry him?" said Grace, tartly.

"Why? Good God!"

He stood writhing and quivering. Something in her face seemed to strike sudden conviction to his heart. He turned upon her almost fiercely.

"Is this thing true you are telling me?" he demanded.

"As true as the gospel," she made answer. A groan broke from him. He covered both hands over his face, a moment, and then removed them.

"I beg your pardon," he said, in a hoarse voice. "I had no right to doubt your word."

"You had no occasion, at least."

"But this is such a terrible thing for me to believe—" He stopped suddenly. Overpowered by the emotion that wrung his soul, he caught her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"Dear lady," he cried, "tell me everything. I would know the worst. Do you know why Rachel consented to wed that man?"

"Because he is rich, and she is poor, I suppose."

"No, no! You are very wide of the truth. It was not that—it was not that. I think I see it all. She meant to sacrifice herself to me!"

He stopped to wipe away the clammy drops that had broken out on his forehead.

"She shall not do it," he went on, fiercely. "That villain, that thrice-accursed villain has driven me a step too far! He shall yet pay dearly for all this wrong and treachery."

Then he flung her hand rudely, violently from him, swung on his heel, and darted like a madman into the shrubbery.

Grace felt frightened and puzzled. She had seen something awful in the man's face before he left her so abruptly—a dark, vengeful hatred that made her shudder.

What had she done? Too late she regretted bitterly her careless words—her silly artifice to arouse the jealousy of this handsome stranger. Murder might come of it, and if so, could she ever hold herself guiltless?

Thoroughly alarmed, she turned and fled precipitately toward the house. Mrs. Heathcliff met her on the terrace steps.

"Oh, mother!" she moaned, throwing herself, panting and sobbing, into the perplexed woman's arms.

Mrs. Heathcliff gently sought to soothe her.

"My poor child, what has happened? Why are you so disturbed? Try to tell me, and to compose yourself."

Grace shivered from head to foot. She was really very much frightened. She feared some terrible calamity would follow her idle words.

"I have been so foolish, so culpable," she cried. "I can never forgive myself."

Then, in answer to her mother's questions, she related the scene that had transpired in the garden.

"That poor young fellow was nearly frantic," she said, in conclusion. "If he meets Mr. Dent, there will be blood spilled between them."

Mrs. Heathcliff had stood leaning against the iron railing that protected the steps. Her face was ashy white, and a wild look of terror showed itself in every feature.

"That man—the stranger," she muttered, giving heed to Grace's last words. "What was he like?"

"Tall and handsome, with a blonde beard—"

"And wonderful yellow hair?"

"Yes, the most beautiful hair in the world—like spun gold."

Mrs. Heathcliff hid her face, and slowly faltered:

"It is he!"

Grace caught the words. "Who is it?" she demanded.

No answer. "Who is it?" she cried, again.

"Mother, you know that man! Why will you not tell me who he is?"

Mrs. Heathcliff brought the color back to lip and cheek by a powerful effort.

"Hush, child," she said, harshly. "You are mistaken. I know no more of him than you have told me."

Grace shrugged, coughed, wiped her beautiful eyes, and said, after a pause:

"Mr. Dent was not in the house an hour ago. Has he returned?"

"No."

"You don't know where he is?"

"No."

"I was sure of it," clasp her hands, and looking scared. "He must be in the grounds, and might meet the stranger at any moment."

"True," returned Mrs. Heathcliff, knitting her brow thoughtfully.

"It must not be permitted. I tell you murder will be done!"

"Who is to prevent it?"

"You—and I—"

answered Grace, hysterically. "Come down into the shrubbery with me. You must come. I cannot rest until I have found Mr. Dent or the stranger."

"Humph!" sneered Mrs. Heathcliff, but her lips were colorless, and she offered no opposition.

They slipped noiselessly into one of the nearest paths. Twilight had deepened rapidly. It was now quite dark in the shaded walks, but a gibbous moon hung in the western heaven.

They had not proceeded far when the report of a pistol, at no great distance, rung out sharp and shrill on the quiet air.

Grace heard it, and uttered a wild, wild shriek.

"Too late—too late!" she screamed. "Oh, my God, what have I done!"

Then she fled precipitately in the direction from whence the sound proceeded.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE PISTOL-SHOT.



"God forgive you, Rachel," she said, "if this is your work."

"Her work, mother?" cried Grace, starting and trembling. "Hush, oh, hush! You know it is not."

"Directly, it may not be. But there was a reason for the fearful deed that has been done. What was that reason?"

She glared around, from one to the other, but nobody made answer. Dr. Tremaine was stooping over the body, and carefully examining it.

"He is quite dead," he muttered. "The ball must have pierced some vital part, and death was instantaneous."

Mrs. Heathcliff heard without heeding him. A dark flush had crossed her face.

"I must speak out my mind here and now," she said. "Jealous hatred was the palpable cause of this murder. Mr. Dent was betrothed to Rachel. She had another lover, a mysterious stranger, who never dared show his face—a tall, yellow-haired young fellow who has been seen more than once hovering about these grounds. He—"

A bitter moan came from Rachel's white lips. It touched even the heart of Grace. In an agony of remorse and contrition she sprang to her mother's side.

"Don't go on," she pleaded. "For the love of heaven, say no more!"

Mrs. Heathcliff was silent a moment, standing with her mouth firmly shut and drawn down at the corners in a sort of angry perturbation. Then she cried out, fiercely:

"I will speak! This yellow-haired stranger is the murderer, and should be denounced as such. I here denounce him. He must be found and brought to punishment."

"Dick—poor Dick!" gasped Rachel, in faint, heart-sick tones.

The words were forced from her lips in spite of every effort to keep them back. Grace looked soiled, perplexed.

"Hush!" she whispered. "Say nothing, do nothing to betray him."

Grace looked a ghost herself. She was shaking from head to foot. She felt guilty, miserable. Would this terrible calamity ever have happened if she had held her peace?

"Oh, my God! what have I done?" she thought.

Aloud she said, turning her white face upon her mother:

"This is no time for idle accusations. For my sake, if not for Rachel's, be silent."

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

##### THE END OF THE RED TRAIL.

Mrs. HEATHCLIFF replied with an angry snort. But she had done all the mischief she cared to do at that moment, and could afford to remain silent.

Grace's demeanor puzzled her, however. She could not understand that the iron of remorse had already pierced the proud girl to the heart.

Seeing the crime and misery she had perhaps, though unwittingly, caused, wrought a sudden and radical change in the haughty beauty.

Dr. Tremaine's brow was dark and lower.

"Madam," he said, coldly, "our first duty is to the dead. Afterward we can give more thought to the living."

Mrs. Heathcliff caught the tone of reproach in which these words were uttered and bowed stiffly, though with curling lip.

"I accept the rebuke. Now what is to be done?"

He was about to answer, but stopped suddenly, with his eyes bent steadfastly upon the ground.

"Strange," he muttered. "Here is a trail of blood leading away from the spot."

Sleeping nearly to the ground, he distinguished it plainly in the moonlight—clots and smears of blood on the grass and the shrubbery, looking like dark, unsightly blotches in the uncertain light, but clearly blood to his practiced eye.

Grace knelt beside him. She groped along the grass. She, too, saw the blood, and one of her hands was stained by it.

She wiped it off, shuddering.

"The trail leads toward the shrubbery," she said.

"Yes," answered Dr. Tremaine, thoughtfully.

"Not from it?"

He did not answer, but silently pointed out the perceptible impress of a heavy foot in a bed of yielding moss at the distance of three or four yards. The foot was certainly pointed away from the spot where the corpse was lying.

The eyes of the two met for a moment. The same thought had entered the mind of each.

"For Rachel's sake," whispered Dr. Tremaine, rising, very white, but uttering no word.

"For Rachel's sake," answered Grace, in the same low tone, following him back to her mother's side.

But Rachel had been watching them with great staring, wide-open eyes, full of unutterable dread and terror. Nothing that had been said or done had escaped her observation.

She crept up close to Dr. Tremaine, took his hand in her own that shook so he could scarcely hold it, and pressed it warmly.

"Thank you," was all that she said.

It was enough. He knew from that moment she had caught at his own suspicion, and shared it.

Now, turning sharply round, he said: "Go to the house, all of you, for help. I will remain with the body. Send three or four men with a litter."

"Yes, it must be done," said Mrs. Heathcliff, drawing her scarf more closely, and shivering a little. "You will have a lonely watch while we are away. Come, Grace."

Rachel lingered behind the rest. Her eyes were burning like two stars in the fearful palor of her face.

"Let me share your vigil," she pleaded.

Giving her a swift glance, he replied:

"No, I am not afraid to remain alone. Go, quickly."

His look said:

"You must go. It is the only way if you do not wish to call immediate attention to what you and I suspect."

She understood him.

"I will go," she whispered, heaving a long-drawn sigh. "Dr. Tremaine, I can trust you to do what is for the best."

This was all. Mrs. Heathcliff and Grace were already several yards away. She ran forward to join them, and the next instant the shrubbery hid the three figures from Dr. Tremaine's sight.

He sat down beside the corpse, pale and languid, all the weariness and misery he felt showing itself in his face now that the necessity for concealment no longer existed.

Oh, how dreary and cheerless the moonlight looked, sitting through the tangled greenness

of the wood, lying on the wet and glistening grass, and creeping noiselessly over the pallid features of the dead man by his side.

What a vast grave of wrecked hopes the world seemed, with sorrow and heart-break perpetually striding up and down its length like twin-sisters, ever inseparable!

"What will the end be, oh, what will the end be?" he repeated to himself, more than once, while that lonely vigil lasted. "Poor Rachel! God pity her!"

Well might he say that!

It was, indeed, poor Rachel! His heart bled for her. Every doubt he had ever felt was increased ten-fold by what had happened. She loved this handsome stranger who had murdered Edward Dent! In vain he tried to think otherwise. The conviction would force itself home upon his mind.

How she must suffer, knowing all his guilt and wickedness!

"Ah, had she only loved me one-half so fondly, how happy I might have made her," he thought, once, and then grew ashamed of his own selfishness.

Presently voices sounded in the distance, and footsteps drew near. Four men emerged from the shrubbery, bearing some object between them.

They were the men Mrs. Heathcliff had sent with the litter.

It was a solemn procession that filed along the shadow-haunted path leading up to Fairlawn a little later. Dr. Tremaine walked first, with his head uncovered, and the cooing night-winds lifting the curls from his white forehead.

When they reached Fairlawn he had thrown off his heartsick mood, and was his placid, alert self once more.

He took care to send the men in different directions before Mrs. Heathcliff had an opportunity to see them—one for the village doctor, one for the undertaker, and the remaining two on other errands.

He walked about the house, silent and watchful. Presently he saw a demure little figure in a sober drab gliding out of a side door opening upon the terrace, and flit like a spirit across the lawn.

It was Rachel. Of course he guessed her errand.

"She is going to look for the murderer."

He hesitated a moment, uncertain what to do. Then he snatched up his hat and followed her.

It seemed mean and wrong to be dogging her footsteps like this. But he plunged recklessly into the shrubbery. His anxiety would not suffer him to remain inactive. Some harm might come to her.

She paused every now and then to listen, as she drew nearer the scene of the murder. Dr. Tremaine was compelled to moderate his speed, and move with extreme caution.

She did not linger in the glade, but ran on swiftly, as if frightened, plunging into the bushes toward which the bloody trail had pointed.

Finally she halted and called in a soft, suppressed voice: "Dick, Dick! Where are you, Dick?" and then ran on a little further, crying out again in the same manner.

The second time there came an answer. It was a low moan only, and sounded from a dense thicket at the left.

She seemed to know the voice. With a quick exclamation of relief and joy, she thrust the thick branches aside and ran onward.

Dr. Tremaine stood quite still, listening. He heard two or three low cries, an eager whisper, and then the sound of suppressed weeping.

Afterward there was a silence. It lasted so long he grew frightened, at last, and was preparing to move on when he heard a little rustling of the leaves, and Rachel stood before him.

She drew back, crying out sharply.

He could see her whole figure quiver in the moonlight.

"You!" she said, shrilly.

"Forgive me," and he held out his hand with a pleading gesture. "I saw you steal away from the house, and followed you. I dared not trust you to come alone."

She seemed to catch her breath quickly once or twice. At last she looked up at him.

"You know all, Dr. Tremaine?"

"I know that the— that he is concealed in yonder thicket," he answered, pointing behind her.

"Oh, my God!" She sprang forward. She caught his hand, raised it to her lips. "You are good and kind and noble," she cried. "You will not betray him, Dr. Tremaine! You will not!"

The anguish of her appeal went straight to his heart.

"I may be doing wrong; I shall be severely censured. But, for your sake, Rachel, I will do nothing to bring the criminal to justice."

She covered his hand with her kisses and her tears. She seemed almost beside herself.

"That is not all," she faltered, after a pause. "We need help—your help."

"You shall have it."

She met his gaze with an earnest, wistful look.

"Do you quite understand me?"

"I think I do," he answered.

"That we need your assistance as a physician?"

"Yes. This man—your friend—is wounded. I suspected as much when I discovered the bloody trail in the glade."

"We may trust you—we may depend upon you?"

"Yes."

She drew a long breath of relief and satisfaction.

"Come with me," she whispered, leading the way into the thicket.

Dr. Tremaine followed. On a mossy bank, where a chance strip of moonlight fell clear and bright, lay the wounded man. His face looked ghastly, and his beautiful yellow hair fell over his forehead in wild disorder.

He heard Dr. Tremaine's step, and started up, glaring at him savagely.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"Hush, Dick," said Rachel, gliding to his side. "Dr. Tremaine is our friend."

"Our friend!" he repeated, gazing steadily and half-suspiciously at the new-comer.

"Yes, Dick. Do you think I would trust him if he were not?"

"No, no."

He put out his hand with a low, faint laugh.

"Excuse me, Dr. Tremaine, if I do not rise to greet you. But you are very welcome, if you are indeed Rachel's friend and mine."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 378.)

WHEN you have had success and prosperity and social consideration, if your success is turned into defeat, and your prosperity departs, and your social relationships are broken—learn how to stand sufficient in yourself without these things. Learn first how to be a man by sympathy, and then learn how to be a man without sympathy.

#### PRAY.

BY HARRIET ESTHER WARNER.

When the world seems cold and soulless,  
When its shadows darkest fall,  
When thy heart is almost bursting  
With the weight of sorrow's pall—  
When the loves that thou hast cherished  
Pass like the sweet flowers away,  
And thy home is eypress shadowed—  
Think of Heaven, and humbly pray.

If Wealth and Fame, those glittering bubbles,  
Have eluded thy pursuit,  
If from all the world's vast gardens  
Dead Sea apples are thy fruit;  
If you are weary of the journey  
Of life's sleep and rugged way,  
And your tired feet seem slipping—  
Think of Heaven, and humbly pray.

Though the world hath many crosses  
For your aching heart to bear,  
Though you count life's gains and losses,  
And deem fortune most unfair—  
Though your path is dark with storm-clouds  
That obscure the light of day,  
If you crave their silver lining,  
Think of Heaven, and humbly pray.

Prayer will rend the veil of sorrow,  
Lift the heart from out despair;  
Prayer will bring you richer treasures  
Than the miser's hoard of care;  
Prayer will lighten every burden,  
Gild with hope the darkest day;  
Prayer will keep thy feet from straying—  
Therefore, ever watch and pray.

#### "Richard is Himself Again."

### The Velvet Hand:

#### OR, THE IRON GRIP OF INJUN DICK.

A Wild Story of the Cinnabar Mines.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "INJUN DICK," "OVERLAND KIT,"  
"ROCKY MOUNTAIN BOB," "KENTUCK  
THE SPORT," ETC., ETC.

#### CHAPTER X.

THE "HOG" TALKS BUSINESS.

SUDDEN was the interruption, complete the surprise.

The dusky forms of a hundred well-armed warriors crowned the rocks of the defile.

Armed to the teeth was Velvet Hand, but what could one man do against a host?

And the Indian maid, crouching at his feet; like another Samson, he had been betrayed, by a woman, to defeat and death, he wondered, too, that she could be brought to lead herself, so that a deception, for gratitude is generally the strongest impulse due to the savage breast.

High on the crest of a lava rock stood the great chief of the McClouds; as proud a king—dusky though his skin and barbarian his pomp—as any Old World monarch of them all.

In his hand he bore a patent breech-loading rifle. The days of savage weapons have long since passed away, and the modern red chief meets his foe armed with weapons of the latest pattern, thanks to the paternal care of a benevolent government which provides its "helpless" with the latest style of weapons, so that they may be enabled to kill game—and white men—with ease and grace.

"Betrayed to death by you, Water-bird!" Velvet Hand exclaimed, as, with an undaunted front, he faced the fearful odds arrayed against him.

"As the bright stars can witness, I am innocent," the girl moaned, evidently deeply afflicted.

There was truth in her voice if ever truth spoke in human accents, and the imperiled man believed her.

Motionless as statues for a moment stood all the actors in this strange scene; the savage warriors with brandished weapons in their dusky hands, waiting but for the signal of the chief to spring forward at once to the slaughter of the solitary white, and Velvet Hand, as cool of eye and as steady of nerve as though all this startling, warlike display was but an empty pageant, "full of sound and fury but signifying nothing."

And then a change came over the spirit of the scene; the McCloud chief spoke:

"Let my warriors hold off their hands, and you, bold white chief, throw down your little guns!"

"Oh, no!" Velvet Hand replied, quickly: "I will live I'll hang on to my weapons. You red fellows have the advantage just now, but if I must die, be sure I will have company in crossing the dark river!"

The McCloud chief frowned as he listened to the bold words of the white.

"And will my brother dare attempt to resist the braves of the red McClouds in their native hills?" the old warrior cried, lustily.

"Let my brother throw down his weapons and beg for mercy! If he tries to play the wolf, let him not murmur if the red hunters give to him the fate of the wolf!"

"Does the chief think to scare me with words?" Velvet Hand replied, contemptuously. "Let him talk to the winds, and bid them be still when they choose to blow. Alone—a single man am I, but before you take my scalp, I'll send some of your warriors to their long home. Trust to your mercy! Oh, no! If I must face death, it shall be with arms in my hands and not as a bound and helpless prisoner."

For a moment the McCloud chieftain seemed undecided; he looked at his red warriors and he looked at the daring white man who so boldly held his ground.

As well as any man in the Western wilds he knew how lightly the cool-eyed white man held that precious jewel which men call life; no stranger was he to the story of the past wherein the desperate white chief had played so prominent and bloody a part.

The red McCloud was an acute and witty chieftain. He had a deep purpose in view in springing this trap upon the white man. Through his trusty spies he had learned of the acquaintance which had been so strangely formed between the white man and the young McCloud girl, and had seized upon it as a means to lure Velvet Hand into his power. Acting under his direction, one of the old squaws had suggested to the girl—who had confided to the aged crone her acquaintance with the Cinnabar man—that she could easily pay the debt of gratitude due to the white man by revealing to him a secret "pocket" in the mountain where the precious gold-dust could be procured, and this was the reason why the Water-bird had wished for the interview; but it was all a scheme on the part of the old chieftain to get the white man into his power. The secret "pocket" in the mountain existed only in the imagination of the old squaw.

The plan had succeeded in every particular, excepting that the McCloud chief had anticipated that the white man would surrender upon seeing the number that opposed him, and the bold defiance of Velvet Hand had surprised him.

Koo-choo, the Hog, meant business; it was not merely to take the scalp of the white man that he had intrigued to lure him to the lonely defile above the McCloud canyon, but he had a far deeper purpose in view.

The bold attitude of the white man, however, did not suit him. He did not desire to treat with Velvet Hand as with a potentate of equal power, but preferred to have him helpless—a prisoner in his hands, and then talk to him.

In fact, the wily McCloud chief wanted all the advantage on his side.

But it was not to be.

The trick had succeeded; the white was in the defile alone, surrounded by the armed red men, but he had not surrendered, nor did he intend to.

A conflict was not to be thought of, for an attack would defeat the purpose which the red chief had in view. Therefore, with as good a grace as possible, the McCloud chief prepared to make the best of the situation.

"The Red McClouds would be friends with the bold white chief," he said, with great dignity.

Velvet Hand smiled; the idea pleased him. Force had failed; the chief would now try cunning.

"No man in all the great north land would the warriors of the McCloud sooner call brother than the white chief who is as brave as the bear, as cunning as the beaver, and as wise as the owl," continued the old warrior. "In the mind of the McCloud chief lives the past. He remembers his brother when he was the great chief of the Shasta nation and wore the war-paint of the red-man. His white brothers do not treat him well; why does he dwell with them in their lodges up the river? Why does he not make his home with the red-men in the mountain wilderness? The Shastas are no longer a great tribe, but the McClouds are the lords of all the northern land; the Red McClouds will be glad to welcome so great a warrior as my brother, and they will do him honor."

And then the old chief waved his hand. Instantly the signal was obeyed, and like magic the savage warriors vanished, each separate brave sinking to his covert amid the rocks with ghost-like celerity.

Then down from his lofty perch the old warrior stepped, and, casting his rifle into the hollow of his arm, he advanced directly to the little level spot where Velvet Hand stood.

The Indian girl rose to her feet as the old warrior came on, and, stepping back a few paces, surveyed him with a curious look upon her pretty face; for the young squaw was pretty, despite her dusky complexion and the unmistakable Indian cast to her features.

Koo-choo halted in front of the white, and his black glittering eyes peered curiously first at Velvet Hand and then at the girl.

"My brother is a great brave—a cunning one, too, or else the Water-bird would never have flown from her wigwam to meet him. Does my brother know that Hula-ha-ha is the daughter of Koo-choo, and that she shall be the squaw of the white man if he wishes her?"

This was business with a vengeance.

#### CHAPTER XI.

WHAT THE "HOG" WANTED.

The maiden modestly cast down her eyes, but the look of joy upon her face told only too plainly that she would be no unwilling bride.

Velvet Hand glanced at the girl for a moment in his odd, peculiar way, while the old chief watched him, eagle-eyed.

Then the white turned his attention to the McCloud warrior.

"You do me too much honor," he said, quietly. "What am I to do for you in return?"

The chief drew himself up proudly.

"The McCloud warrior does not sell his daughter!" he exclaimed, in haughty dignity. "He gives her to his white brother; that is all."

"And yet, if you desired a service at my hands I should feel bound to comply," Velvet Hand suggested, shrewdly.

"Ah, that is another matter," the old chief said, his dark eyes flashing with a cunning light, then he beckoned the white to a spot a little remote from the one where the girl was standing. "The McClouds are jealous of the white men in the valley," he continued, cautiously. "Their lodges grow too fast; some day the red warriors will take the war-path and drive the gold-diggers away."

Velvet Hand shook his head sadly.

"Has the chief forgotten the fate of the Shastas?" he asked. "It is useless to try to drive back the whites by force. It cannot be done."

"Then my brother would not join the McClouds if they took the war-path against the white men?"

"No."

"Not if he took the Water-bird to sing in his wigwam?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because the destruction is useless and would only end in the defeat of your tribe."

The old warrior nodded his head, sagely.

"So the great chief of the McClouds thinks, and when the Modocs talked of the war-path he said, 'No, just as my brother has said.'"

"Are the Modocs dissatisfied?" asked Velvet Hand, astonished at the intelligence.

"Yes; their treaty is all lies; no blankets but old ones cut in two; their meat and flour rotten."

"But they are only a handful."

"In the lava-beds they will fight like the old mountain-bear fights for her cubs."

"Let them fight, chief, but you and your tribe keep out of it," the white cautioned.

The old chief grinned.

"Talk fight much, maybe, but no fight. Will the chief take the Water-bird?"

"And what must I do for her?" Velvet Hand was evading the question.

"Not much," and the old chief looked inquisitively in the face of the white as if he rather hesitated to commit himself further.

"But what, chief, what must I do



the false white men who have stolen the land of the red chiefs? Is this pale-face a greater brave than can be found in the red McCloud nation? I for one deny it! Let him prove that he is a better man than the McCloud warriors can boast before he seeks to take the fairest jewel of the tribe for his squaw."

Again there came a hum of approval from the lips of the red-men, and the wily Koo-choo saw that this demonstration was one not to be easily passed over.

As for the Cinnabar man he saw himself placed in a most unpleasant position. It was very evident that these two bold-speaking warriors meant "business." If he wanted the red maiden they intended that he should not get her without a struggle.

Now when it is considered that he hadn't the slightest idea of forming an alliance with the dusky daughter of the red McClouds, and that he had merely temporized in the matter so as to get out of the predicament in which he so unexpectedly found himself, with as little difficulty as possible, to become involved in a quarrel with two red warriors was far from pleasant.

As brave as any mortal living was the cool, keen-eyed man of Cinnabar; utterly reckless, too, of his own life, caring but little whether he lived or died, having but few ties to bind him to the world; yet to enter into a life and death struggle with these two red chiefs, and to do so for the sake of a woman who was no more to him than any other dusky damsel of the woods was utterly ridiculous; but, how to escape from the embarrassing position was a puzzle.

True, he might openly declare that he did not want the Water-bird, and simply decline the honor of the alliance which old Koo-choo the Hog had arranged for him; but, in that case there was little doubt that the baffled chief would raise the war-shout, and that, instead of encountering the two warriors, he, single-handed, would have to fight all the savages.

As to the McCloud chief he was not sorry that affairs had taken this sudden and unexpected turn. The white man would be forced to declare himself. He must either fight for the girl, thus practically accepting her, or else decline the alliance altogether, and in this latter case the old red chief mentally promised himself the pleasure of "lifting" the scalp of his esteemed white brother on the instant.

But, the old chief wished Velvet Hand to accept; he coveted the fair Californian girl, and he believed that he could easily secure her through the aid of the white man. He therefore determined to force Velvet Hand into the contest.

The ears of the great McCloud chief were always open to the words of his warriors, and he began to wonder, gravely, "He cannot blame the McCloud warriors that they are angry at the thoughts of the Water-bird leaving her people to sing in the lodge of a pale stranger. This white chief is a great brave; many moons ago he fought the warriors of the red McClouds and brought sorrow to their wigwams. Koo-choo knows it, and therefore is he satisfied to receive the white man as a son-in-law; he is proud to have so great a chief wed a daughter of the McClouds, just as long ago he wed the queen of the Shastas. But, it is only right that my braves should call for deeds as well as words. The white chief wants the McCloud girl—he will fight for her with any brave of the nation who cares to challenge him, and I, the great chief of the tribe, will see that the fight is fair."

A very emphatic grunt came from the lips of the red warriors. This sort of thing was exactly to their liking; and then, too, there was hardly a man in the savage ranks who doubted that the white man would be beaten in the struggle. The young chief, The Little Horse, was as fine a brave as the McCloud tribe could boast; and, as for the ugly, scarred-faced One-eyed Crow, deeds of blood were so heavy on his head, that there was not a red warrior in the nation, Koo-choo, the Hog, alone excepted, who could boast a bloodier record.

Velvet Hand was in for it; there was no escape, and therefore with as good a grace as possible he prepared to "face the music."

"I am ready for the trial!" he exclaimed. "Let the red braves who doubt that I am a great chief step forward, and on their heads I will prove that I am as good a man as any red warrior in the McCloud tribe."

Eagerly the two warriors who had spoken stepped forward.

"The Little Horse and the One-eyed Crow," said Koo-choo, indicating the two. "Which one will encounter the white chief first?"

As crafty as he was bloodthirsty was the older McCloud warrior, and he warily calculated that if the Little Horse took the first chance the white man might disable him, and so a powerful rival would be removed, and even if he conquered the pale chief, matters would be no worse than they were at present, so the old brave spoke instantly:

"Let the Little Horse take the first chance," he said; "he was the first to speak and it is his right."

The young brave eagerly accepted the position.

Face to face the rivals met.

"I bear no malice to my red brother," observed Velvet Hand, gazing with a keen eye at the intelligent and pleasing face of the young McCloud warrior. "It is merely a question between us as to which is the better man. We need not seek each other's lives; let us lay aside our weapons and with our bare hands, muscle against muscle, struggle for the mastery."

The young warrior accepted the condition, and soon, stripped of all useless incumbrances, the two faced each other.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 380.)

## The Giant Rifleman:

Wild Life in the Lumber Regions.

BY OLL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "SURE-SHOT SETH," "DAKOTA DAN," "RED BOB," "THE BOY ROAD-AGENT," ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

"RICHARD HIMSELF AGAIN."

The blow that felled Frank Ballard to the earth was not a fatal one. The rubber-hood drawn over his head had saved his life, no doubt; for it broke the force of the blow and he was only stunned. But when he had recovered, it was with a violent pain in the head, and a thousand horrors flitting through his brain. He found that he had been lying partially in the water's edge, and, in fact, was seated in the water when he recovered consciousness. How he had come there he knew no more than if he had never existed until that moment. It was pitchy dark where he lay, but out before him he could see the moonlight falling on the river.

With an almost dizzy brain he endeavored to study out his situation. Vague glimpses of the past flitted and flashed in painful mockery before his mental vision; but, aided by the roar of the rapids, he finally succeeded in gathering the links of his shattered memory. All the past, up to the moment it had been so suddenly and violently blotted out, burst upon his mind, causing him to start with fear and horror. His first thought was of Edith; and he started up calling her name; but there was no answer. He glanced up at the moon, and seeing the night was far advanced he sank within his breast. When he discovered that his rubber suit had been taken from him, grave fears took possession of his mind; for something of the real truth flashed through his perturbed mind. He became sorely anxious to hear from Edith, and had resolved to cross over to the island just as he was, when a voice cried out:

"Stand!"

Frank, standing bolt upright, turned his face toward the unknown, who stood concealed in the bushes.

"Who are you?" the voice again demanded.

"Frank Ballard," was the answer.

"Murderer!" hissed the unseen.

A chill crept through Frank's heart.

"I am not a murderer," he replied.

"You betrayed the confidence of my sister, and then attempted to kill her."

"Whom do you mean; Edith Mount?" asked Frank.

"Yes," was the reply.

"You are mistaken," replied Frank, speaking with the candor of innocence; "I was going to the island with Edith when some devil beat me down and having stripped off my cloak flung me into the river. And there have I lain for—well, I can't tell you how long. I recovered but a few moments ago. This, sir, is the God's truth; and I have a well across my head big as a man's arm to bear witness to what I say. Do you believe what I tell you?"

"I believe you, sir; your story corresponds exactly with Edith's supposition; and I came over here to hunt for your dead body," replied the brother.

"Then Edith is not dead?"

"No; but she is severely wounded. The demon that came to the island in your place shot her."

"Can I see her?" Frank asked.

"Not to-night; she must rest. When she learns that you are alive she'll rest easier. At first we thought you had done the shooting; but a calm, second thought convinced her to the contrary."

Frank groaned in spirit, turned and sat down.

"Good-evening, Mr. Ballard," said the speaker in the shadows; then he advanced to the water's edge and was soon moving across the wire-bridge toward Castle Island.

Frank arose, bathed his aching head, and then started back to camp where he arrived about an hour before daybreak. His friends, who had passed over a restless night in consequence of his prolonged absence, were surprised by the look of pain upon his face; and at once inquired after the cause.

Frank sat down and told them all about his night's adventures, concealing nothing of the mysteries of Spirit Rapids and Castle Island.

"Well, by the witches of Salem!" exclaimed Old Wolverine, "did you ever dream of such things?"

Goliath Strong seemed wonderfully surprised by the young bee-hunter's story; and many were the expressions of surprise that passed between him and Old Wolverine in regard to the matter.

Daylight at length came, and with the first streaks of light, Wolverine shouldered his gun and set off in search of game for breakfast.

In the course of an hour he returned with two fat young wild-turkeys, which he at once dressed in true hunter style, and arranged before a fire to roast.

Meanwhile, Goliath Strong and the bee-hunters had gone down to a little purling stream hard by and made a thorough ablution, which strengthened their bodies, invigorated their blood, and sharpened their appetites.

When they returned to camp the turkeys were done to a crisp brown, and ready to be served. All ate with avidity—particularly Frank, who declared, he was never so hungry in his life, and that the turkey was the most delicious game he had ever tasted.

After their meal they made no move toward continuing their journey. For some reason or other, Goliath Strong and Old Wolverine concluded they had better remain there in camp a few days. They gave no reason for this inactivity; and since the bee-hunters were in no ways concerned about the Unknown Marksman, they did not insist on any explanation.

As the day advanced Wolverine again took his rifle and dogs and went in search of game. Goliath Strong seated himself at the foot of a tree and taking a slip of paper from an inner pocket busied himself for more than two hours looking over it. Ed and Frank noticed that he studied it with contracted brows, as though it contained some profound problem; but it was with a look of disappointment that he finally folded the paper and carefully replaced it in his pocket.

Thus the day wore away and night again set in. Ed and Frank laid down to rest; Old Wolverine left camp and went scouting in the direction of Spirit Rapids. Goliath Strong alone remained seated by the camp-fire, and when assured that his companions were asleep he took out that same paper and again began its study. Frank, who lay with his head partially covered with his hat, slyly watched the giant hunter. He could not sleep, for he thought the two hunters were acting rather queerly. He did not know what to make of their conduct; and, feigning sleep, determined to watch their move.

Goliath pondered and grimaced over the paper for hours, and would have probably continued so all night, had Old Wolverine not returned.

"Make anything out of it, G'lar?" the wolf-hunter asked, as he leaned his gun against a tree and removed his accoutrements.

"Not a thing," Goliath replied, with a frown that denoted his vexation; "it is just like confusion, with footing enough to lead one on deeper and deeper into its tangled mazes."

"Hav'n't you showed it to the boys, yit?"

"No; I thought I would work on it to-night, and then, if I couldn't figure it out, I would turn it over to them," replied Goliath.

"They might fetch it, G'lar," replied Wolverine; "for I tell ye them boys are long-headed."

"I'll let them into it to-morrow," declared Goliath.

Wondering what secret existed between the hunters, in which he was soon to become a confidant, Frank Ballard went to sleep, and slept soundly until all were awakened the next morning by the startling report of a rifle in camp.

Springing to their feet, they saw Old Wolverine standing at one side, with his rifle in hand, while down in the hollow, about seventy paces away, a deer lay struggling in its death throes.

"We'll have roasted venison for breakfast," announced the hunter.

"And when we have breakfasted, boys," said Goliath, addressing Frank and Ed, "I have a puzzle, or problem, that I want you to help me work out."

"What kind of a problem?" asked Ed.

"A financial problem—one worth an fortune to your young friend, Nathan Darrall."

### CHAPTER XX.

CAPTAIN SPENCER GETS A "WELL."

On the fourth night after the meeting at the Five Points, four men emerged from the shadows of the woods, and passed on the river bank opposite Castle Island. They were all well armed, which was evidence of their being upon the trail of the dread Unknown Marksman.

One of them was Randolph Spencer; another James Trimble; the other two were lumbermen.

"Right here," the captain said, as he paused near the foot of the rapids, "is that concealed bridge of which I was telling you. You will all have to use extreme care in crossing, for only one can cross at a time. A misstep will be your death-warrant."

"Very well, Cap., you go ahead," said Trimble.

Spencer explored along the bank until he had found the hidden bridge, then he reached up and caught hold of the balance-wires, and began picking his way across the dizzy waters, slowly, cautiously.

"Wing the darkness of the night, and the rising mist, he was soon lost from sight; but when he arrived on the opposite side, he telegraphed the fact to his friends by striking one of the wires, the end of which was fastened to a tree.

Trimble was the next to cross; then followed the two lumbermen, and when they were all together on the island, the captain led the way to the summit of the hill, and paused to give further orders.

"Here we are, boys, on Castle Island," he exclaimed.

"So I perceive," replied Trimble, "and from the familiar way in which you saunter about, one would think you had been here before, captain."

"Well, what next?" asked one of the lumbermen, very impatiently. "I want to keep moving, now that I'm started."

"The cabin stands in a deep sink or hollow in the very center of the island," replied Spencer; "and I would suggest that we go down and reconnoiter around."

The captain led the way down the hill toward the lonely hut of the mysterious people. As it became unfolded from the cover of the sycamores, a light was seen shining from the window. This told them that the occupants were at home.

The four advanced to within twenty paces of the door, then stopped under some trees to consult.

"What now, captain?" asked Trimble.

"Let us creep up as close as we can, then dash in upon them with drawn weapons," replied Spencer, speaking in a quick, nervous tone, scarcely above a whisper.

"Lead the way, Captain Randolph," said Trimble.

The captain moved forward, revolver in hand, and when about ten feet from the door, he gave a yell and bounded into the cabin followed by his companions. But, surprise and disappointment were all that met them, for not a living soul, except themselves, was in the cabin. A smoldering fire on the hearth lit up the room. This must have been fed with the past hour, but where were the hands that did it?

As the intruders gazed about the room, they became deeply impressed by the silence and air of mystery that seemed to pervade the place.

The house was furnished with all the comforts of a border home. The neatness and handiwork of woman were upon every side.

"They must have got wind of our coming and fled," said Trimble, and his voice sounded hollow and strange to his companions.

"It seems to me there's been a funeral bout here recently," remarked Spencer, with a look that implied more than his words; "but let's to work and search every hole and corner in this house and on the island."

All seemed anxious enough to obey, and in a few minutes the house had been thoroughly searched; but nothing could be found of the inhabitants of the place.

Daylight found them still hunting; but in vain. The place was deserted by all save two or three tame deer and a troop of bright-eyed squirrels that risked about uneasily.

"They are gone," Spencer finally admitted; "but they may return; and so I am going to remain here and take them by surprise."

"You'll not catch them napping, Cap.," declared Trimble; "it is my opinion that the inhabitants of this island, whoever they may be, have friends among us who keep them posted."

"I believe that, Jim; and somehow or other, I can't help suspecting Old Wolverine. He acted queer the other night. Don't you think so?"

"Not any more so than that Goliath Strong."

"Well, time will tell; if you will remain with me, we will watch here for the return of the folks. I'm satisfied that it's the hand of the Unknown Marksman, from what I told you."

Trimble volunteered to remain with the captain; and so the two lumbermen at once took their departure for the mainland.

The two partners in rascality remained on the island nearly the whole day, waiting in vain for the return of the inhabitants. Once Trimble noticed his companion walking about searching the ground in a manner that appealed to his curiosity, and so he asked:

"What you hunting, Cap?"

"Oh, I was just looking for a fresh mound—in other words, a grave," replied Spencer.

"A grave?" exclaimed Trimble; "why should you expect to find a grave here?"

"I didn't know but what some of the folks had 'gone over the hills,' as Wolverine says, and that the others had deserted the island."

"Exactly," responded Trimble, and he joined in the search.

As the hours wore on, the two finally ascended the heights overlooking the river, and ran their eyes carefully across the wooded shores beyond. While gazing across the rapids, Trimble saw a puff of smoke burst from the bushes on the opposite shore; and at the same instant Captain Spencer staggered and almost fell; while the crack of a rifle rung out clear and distinct above the roar of the rapids.

A bullet had just grazed the forehead of the captain, raising a livid welt from which the blood seemed ready to burst.

Following up the course of the bullet, Trim-

ble found where it had struck a tree, and in a few minutes he dug it out with the point of his knife.

It was a copper bullet!

This discovery sent a chill to Spencer's heart.

"By heavens, captain! you, too, have got a well across the head from the Unknown Marksman. We are either proof against his accursed copper bullets, or else he is toying with us as a cat plays with a mouse. Ah, look! do you see that figure gliding among the trees over yonder? 'Tis he—the Unknown Marksman!"

### CHAPTER XXI.

LOVE AND JEALOUSY.

NATHAN DARRALL remained at the home of the old cranberry-picker several days; and in this time he fully recovered from his injuries under the kind and loving treatment of Ida Zane and her gentle-hearted mother. On the sixth day after his advent to their secluded home, he made preparations to leave and rejoin his friends. He disliked to inflict himself upon the good people, for he saw that they were very poor. Yet, out of the generosity of their hearts, they seemed ready and willing to sacrifice their own comfort that their guest might be provided for; and so Nathan felt loath to accept of such self-sacrifice in his behalf, since he had but little money to pay them; and even this they refused when he offered it to them.

When he was about ready to leave the cabin Ida approached him with a handsome little sporting rifle and accoutrements, and said:

"Nattie, I am not going to give you this rifle, but loan it to you, seeing you have none. No one should go unarmed in the woods now-a-days. Besides," and a blush stole over her pretty face, "you will have to come back here to return it to me."

"Couldn't I send it back?" he asked.

"No, sir," she replied, and a smile wreathed her lips. "I will receive it from no one but you."

"Then I will accept of your proffered loan for the sake of coming back; for the fact of it is, Ida, I hate to go away. Since my advent here, a great change has come over my happiness and peace of heart; and the Blue Marsh, and the people dwelling here, will ever stand foremost in my memory. You may think me very foolish, Ida, for saying so, but since I came here I have learned to love, and you are the object of that love."

Ida's head drooped and a crimson flush overspread her face. Nathan's words had fallen upon her ears like the sweet inspiration of a song. Her thoughts ran back over the past. She recalled her last meeting with Spencer, and his definition of love; then she looked into her young heart and asked herself whether or not she loved Nathan Darrall; but whatever answer she found there, she made no reply to Nathan's impassioned words.

Nathan had been encouraged in his confession of love by her remarks concerning the gun; and her silence now, was to him full of the happiest meaning. Instinct, rendered acute by love, told him this.

Having bidden the old folks good-by, Nathan took his departure, accompanied by Ida, who was to take him across the creek in her boat.

They walked leisurely down the green island-slope to the creek, launched the boat and embarked. Nathan took the paddle, and seating himself by Ida on the middle seat, paddled out into the center of the stream, and then let the boat drift at the will of the current.

"Ida," he then said, "I do wish I lived near the Blue Marsh."

"I am sure it is not a very romantic place," she said, her eyes looking up at him and beaming with joy.

"No; but those around it make it attractive to me—you in particular, Ida. To you I owe my life; you have won my heart, and oh, if my love could only be reciprocated, then could I go away and return with a light footstep and happy mind."

"Nathan, you will ever be welcomed at our humble home," the maiden replied.

"As a friend?"

"As a dear friend."

"Can I never call you by any more endearing name, Ida? Could I not some day have the privilege of calling you my little wife?"

Ida's eyes drooped shyly, and her lips quivered as she replied:

"Natie, I do love you, but I could never think of leaving my mother and grandpa."

"You never shall, Ida!" he exclaimed, in a passion of love, drawing her to his side and imprinting a kiss upon her brow. "It is enough for me to know that you love me. I can wait, for I am but a boy yet. Some day, perhaps, our love and our lives can be forever sealed."

Ida lifted her eyes and glanced away toward the far for as if looking into the future—to that blissful day. But the smile of infinite glory that lit up her lovely, childlike face faded away, and a cloud, whose darkness seemed to overshadow her young heart, settled upon her brow when she caught sight of Captain Spencer coming up the creek.

"Do not build up your future hopes on that, Nattie," she responded, "for they may be blasted. My mother and grandfather wish me to marry Captain Randolph Spencer."

A sigh that almost deepened into a groan escaped Nattie's lips.

"At first they discouraged Mr. Spencer's suit," Ida continued; "but he is rich and promised them a home of plenty; and as they are growing old, and we are very poor, would it be right for me to disobey them, Nathan?"

Ida, this is terrible news to me—a hard question for me to answer conscientiously; for while it is your duty to obey your parents, it seems cruel to them to inflict a life of misery on their child by having her marry Randolph Spencer, who I have always heard is a bad man. Talk with your people, Ida, and perhaps they will think better of your happiness. I am a poor boy, with a widowed mother depending upon me for sustenance; but I am not only willing to work for you, but for them also. Tell them of our love, and the misery our separation will entail upon our lives. I know your mother is too noble and generous-hearted to insist upon a life of misery for her child. In a day or two I will come back—yes, I will return every day, Ida, until I know it is useless for me to come again."

By this time the boat had drifted some distance down the creek, and so, dipping the paddle, Nattie sent the craft ashore. As he rose to depart, he took Ida's hand in his, and, stooping, imprinted a kiss upon her lips; then tearing himself away and leaping ashore, he bid her adieu, and turning, walked rapidly away, his young heart in a tumult of joy and fear combined.

Watches came into the maiden's eyes as she watched the manly form of her boy lover receding in the distance; and a mental abstraction settled over her mind. She had forgotten that she had seen the form of Captain Spencer some distance down the creek, until startled from her reverie by the sound of approaching footsteps. Looking up, she saw Captain Spencer standing on the bank of the creek, with one foot on the prow of the boat.

"Good-morning, Miss Zane!" he said, rather sarcastically, as he unceremoniously stepped into the canoe and seated himself; "I hope I find you well; I see you are looking very happy."

"Quite happy, indeed," she answered, a little disturbed by his rudeness of manner.

"I should think so," he continued, with a frown, "when you can ride out with a young adventurer like the one that just left you, and having him kissing you at every turn."

"Captain Spencer," she said, a little indignantly, "Nathan Darrall is no adventurer—he is a gentleman."

"Admitting this to be the truth, what right have you—my betrothed wife—to allow other men such liberties as he took with you?"

"I love Nathan Darrall!" she replied, her eyes flashing defiantly, and her lip curling with scorn.

"Love!" he sneered, cut to the quick by her reply; "well indeed! this is a singular case; but I'm of the opinion that love will not go where sent this time. I shall now insist on you or your mother fixing the day for our marriage."

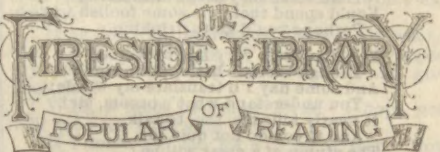
"Mother may, but I will never!"

"Where! that love of yours for a beggar boy is souring your temper, my little dove; but then we'll doctor that when you become the queen of Castle Spencer. We will now return to the cabin, and have your mother arrange matters at once," and so saying, he took up the paddle and pushed off from shore, and then turned up the stream—the dark cloud of jealousy sitting upon his brow—the brow upon which still blazed the livid track of the Unknown Marksman's bullet.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 375.)

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## PODDLE SMOKES.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

A burning shame and so it is  
In your tobacco-smoking;  
And that thing's got to be dried up;  
Now, Poddie, I ain't joking!  
With five or six cigars a day  
Your purse won't stand the suction,  
And as a consequence my bills  
Must suffer a reduction.

My language falls me just to see  
This way in which you're going,  
And if I only had the breath  
I'd give you such a blowing!  
Yet I endure without complaint  
Your follies without number,  
And you don't care a cent how much  
They keep me from my slumber.

You know I've got no words to waste,  
Yet all I say are wasted;  
If I could talk as some wives do  
My wrath you would have tasted.  
Your habits have been bad enough,  
And I've been patient for a year,  
I'd like to give you some advice  
If I had breath and leisure.

I'd make you smoke to your content,  
But in another fashion,  
And then you'd be the fumes  
They make me fume with passion.  
Don't blow your smoke into my face!  
You are not—yes, you are, sir!  
You'll find there's fire somewhere else  
Than there on your cigar, sir.

If I get married after this  
I'll not be to a smoker;  
A man thinks little of his wife  
Who takes such means to smoke her.  
The vile tobacco-smell you have  
I hate it worse than treason;  
I haven't kissed you for a year,  
And you know that's the reason.

If I begin upon this theme  
I'm sure there'll be no stopping;  
If I had the command of speech  
I'd set you soon a-bopping.  
I'll get a pipe and smoke some, too?  
Yes, how'd you like the sight, sir?  
My mother did, I know she did;  
I'll get a pipe tonight, sir.

You earn the money you smoke up?  
If you had many a woman  
You'd have but little for cigars—  
You tyrant most infamous!  
If my expenditures were less  
Than what they are, I'm thinking  
You'd spend that sum some foolish way—  
Perhaps you'd go to drinking.

You'd go from very bad to worse,  
Though there is little room, sir,  
And some day I'll translate my words:  
You understand what's broom, sir?  
It nearly kills me, too, to talk,  
And if you do not quit,  
The stump of a cigar will split, sir.

Schamy,  
THE CAPTIVE PRINCE:OR,  
The Cossack Envoy.

A Story of Russian Life and Adventure.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ,

AUTHOR OF "LANCE AND LASSO," "THE SWORD-  
HUNTERS," "CAVALRY CUSTER," ETC.

IV.

ZISKA HOFFMAN stood at the summit of the tower of Ivan the Terrible, and beheld beneath his feet the vast city of Moscow, glittering in the morning sun. Around him rose the spires of minarets of the marvelous cathedral, gleaming with bright gilding, flaming in all the colors of the rainbow. Below stretched out the great city for miles in all directions. He was in the Kremlin, the great palace of the czars, with its grounds two miles in circumference. Near by, the great bells were thundering out their chimes, for it was a feast day—the feast of St. Nicholas.

"Ah, Petrusha," said the traveler, heartily, "this is indeed a city worth seeing, and a wonderful palace."

Petrusha only bowed. He never presumed to offer any observations to his new master. "And now, Petrusha," said the journalist, "where is this Troitsa Monastery that I hear so much about? I have seen the Kremlin and cathedrals; I have seen your grand factories, but I have heard so much about this monastery that I must see that, too. I think we'll drive there to-morrow."

Petrusha elevated his shoulders deprecatingly. "I grieve to correct your excellency, but it is not possible. The monastery is forty miles off. Your excellency must go by rail."

"I have taken a fancy to drive," he said. "I came to Russia to see the country and the people, not to ride in rail-cars. I could do that at home. I shall take a troika and get post horses on the road."

Petrusha shrugged his shoulders again. "Very well, one of noble blood. There is no law against it that I know of. General Dragonofsky ordered that you should have all possible liberty within certain limits at the Russian."

"See here, Petrusha," he said, harshly, "when it is quite necessary to speak of General Dragonofsky's orders, as for instance if I disobey them, you can tell me. When it is not, hold your tongue, or I may take a fancy to go back and see the general about the insolence of his spy. Do you understand?"

Petrusha turned pale. He knew that his orders were very strict to use respect to the man he was watching, and he knew that he had no power to prevent Ziska doing as he threatened. "Pardon, one of noble blood," he stammered. "I will endeavor to do my duty by your excellency indeed. I am at your excellency's orders entirely."

"Then, come along," said Ziska, more good-naturedly, and they descended the steps and left the Kremlin by the celebrated Spass Vorota or "Savior's Gate." Over the great brick arch hung a picture of the Virgin and child, in bright mosaic, with a gold background, and Petrusha took off his fur cap and made a low obeisance before the picture. The American likewise removed his hat, for to do otherwise at the Spass Vorota brings down the police very quickly.

Outside the walls of the Kremlin stretched a broad open space, and about a hundred yards from the place was a great crowd of troikas (Russian sledges) with the drivers all clamoring away in the true Jehu style of all the world.

As the young traveler approached the shouting crowd he glanced his eye quickly over the horses. The animals were stamping and pawing the ground, shaking the bells of their harness, and all were gayly decorated with colored ribbons.

On the left of the line was a large troika with three black shaggy-looking horses, the only ornament of which was a knot of sky-blue ribbon at the top of the dugs.

Petrusha, I like the looks of those horses," said the American, in a brisk, decided manner. "There is my troika. Those fellows can take me to Troitsa easy enough before night, for the day is still young."

Petrusha looked alarmed. "By no means, your excellency. Yonder is the team of bays that brought us from the hotel. It will be impossible for any one team to drive to the monastery in one day. We must use the podovojnaya and get post-horses."

"Oh, nonsense," said Ziska, continuing to walk to the strange troika. "I've heard so much about the speed and bottom of your Russian horses I'm going to try them. Halloa, you, ish voshitshik! how much will you charge to take us to the Troitsa Monastery?"

He addressed a tall, Herculean fellow with

black eyes and beard and a strong aquiline face, a very different figure from the squat, snub-nosed, Tartar-looking Russians; and the man instantly answered, in broken English:

"Very good, English lord. Troitsa, twenty roubles. Good horse, Cossack, never tire. Good."

The man had not been shouting like the rest, but had advanced quietly as if only trying to catch the American's eye. Petrusha now interfered with a flood of voluble Russian to the driver, interspersed with English appeals to Ziska.

"Consider, your excellency, I don't know this man and he may lose your excellency among robbers. I am responsible for your excellency's safety. (Go away, pig of a Cossack, or I'll have you knouted)—this in Russian. Let your excellency be persuaded and start in good time to-morrow."

Ziska Hoffman made no answer, neither did the big driver. The American simply stepped into the troika and sunk down amid the white wolf-skins with which it was filled, while the driver jumped up on the box and gathered up the reins.

Then Petrusha was thoroughly frightened. "Oh, one of noble blood, do not trust this man. He is a Don Cossack, a robber of the steppe. He will have you killed."

"Poddie, ish voshitshik, (Go ahead, driver)," was the only reply Ziska deigned. Then the big driver cracked his whip, and the three black horses started down the wide street to the city gates at full gallop. As they started, Petrusha jumped on behind and stood on the left runner of the sledge, with his teeth set. He shouted no more, but had evidently made up his mind to accept the situation with the best grace he could.

Ziska said nothing, and the driver was silent as they dashed down the street. Ten minutes of such rapid work brought them to the city gates, and then it appeared what Petrusha was about to do. As they came near the gate, which was flanked, as usual in walled towns, by a guard-house, he suddenly climbed into the troika and took a seat by Ziska.

"Now, sir," he said, savagely, dropping all his respect, "we have gone far enough. Order the driver to stop, or I call the guard."

Then Ziska's whole manner changed of a sudden. He threw up the wolf-skin in front, so as to cover him up to the chin, with a flap covering Petrusha, hiding his right arm from the view of all but the spy, and Petrusha saw the muzzle of a revolver close to his heart. The American's left arm was around the Russian, drawing him up to the pistol. He said not a word, but his eye gleamed with such a devilish expression that the spy, in spite of his strength, turned pale and trembled. As he did so they were almost at the gate, the horses going faster than ever. The wild driver waved his lash in the air and shouted out something in Russian as they passed the guard-house, to which the sentry replied with a gay laugh. He and the driver were evidently old friends.

The next moment they were through the gate, out of the beaten track, and skimming over a white sheet of gleaming ice, as smooth as a mirror, the bells jangling so loud as to drown Petrusha's voice, had he dared to shout. But there seemed to be no fear of that. The spy sat as if transfixed, gazing at the muzzle of the pistol, which almost touched his side. He was evidently completely cowed by the time by the sudden boldness and dexterity displayed by the slender young man beside him. So away went the troika over the white field of ice, till they entered a wood of low fir trees, and a moment later Moscow had disappeared from view behind a dense screen of verdure.

Not till then did the wild driver slacken his pace. He pulled up his team till the shaft-horse was trotting and the outsiders were at a gentle canter. Then he tied the end of his reins into a bunch, and made a sudden spring from the box, alighting on the back of the shaft-horse as if he were used to that sort of exercise. With perfect coolness he untied the bells from the dugs of the horse and put them in his breast, then, without stopping, jumped back on the box, gathered up his reins and drove on. The progress of the sledge at once became almost noiseless.

Then Ziska spoke for the first time, and to the utter astonishment of the spy used perfectly good Russian.

"Now, thou unclean Petrusha, I think I have thee fast. It may save trouble to blow out thy brains here."

"Mercy, one of noble blood, mercy!" faltered the spy. "I will help your excellency in all things; I can tell your excellency—"

"Tell what I ask you and that's all I want," said Ziska, curtly. "What were General Dragonofsky's orders to you about me?"

Petrusha hesitated. "Very well," said Ziska, coolly. "I'd just as soon shoot you as not, and take the orders from your dead body. You have them in the lining of your coat. Take them out, or I'll shoot."

Petrusha's teeth fairly chattered in his breast, then, with his hands unbound, he opened his coat, and handed to Ziska a bundle of papers. He humbled in his bosom, Ziska watching him keenly.

The American smiled in a peculiar manner, and observed:

"Petrusha, I've been in California, and they have a trick there. Drop that pistol!"

There was a bright flash and a sharp little report, as the spy, with a yell of pain, let fall his right arm, shattered at the wrist, and the pistol he had been trying to draw unobserved.

The American picked up the pistol, which had fallen among the furs, and glanced at it, contemptuously.

"Smith and Wesson, old model, no good," he said, coolly.

Then he threw it out of the sledge.

"Now, Master Petrusha, I'll take those papers from you, alive or dead. Do you understand?"

Petrusha grimaced with pain, but he made haste, with his unbound hand, to open his coat, and handed to Ziska a bundle of papers.

The driver, during all this little scene, had not even looked round, except for an instant at the pistol-shot, when he merely shrugged his shoulders, and gave a short laugh.

Now Ziska called to him to stop, and he pulled up.

"Master Petrusha," said the journalist, politely, "we are now just two miles from Moscow. Get out of this troika and stand over there in front of me on the ice. I want to read these papers, and don't wish you to bother me by trying to take this pistol. You understand? I know you're pretty strong; but, as I said before, I've been in California, and when I get the drop on a man I like to keep it. Get out."

Without a word Petrusha obeyed, and halted in the open, while Ziska Hoffman coolly proceeded to read the instructions of General Dragonofsky, chief of the Russian secret police, to the spy set over his own person.

What they were, you will learn next week. (To be continued—commenced in No. 380.)

## The Coxswain's Pet.

BY C. D. CLARK.

WHEN I were a blue-jacket, said the old tar, Dave Estez—Salt-peter Dave we called him—I didn't know when I were well off. I thought it would be a jolly thing to be free, to live in the folsel of a whaler, and so I lit out when my time was up, and wouldn't ship no more. But you hear me, mates; long as I mean to be a sailor I'm goin' the hull hog, an' when I set my foot in York again I'll wend my weary footsteps to the U. S. shipping-office, and when I onct more set my foot on deck of a Yankee man-o'-war, than I sticks.

It's a mighty easy life, when you come to simmer it down. Just, you've got a big ship an' me reg'lar an' is always good, an' the grog is first-class; an' last, they don't send up three or four poor devils to do all the work in the tops, when

they git short-handed, acause there's always men enough to do the work.

But, that ain't neither here nor there. The sloop-of-war Huntress was lying off League Island, waiting for the lieutenant commander, an' I was in her, staked in the larboard-quarter watch, nose number ten, in the foretop, and pulled number two in the cap'tin's gig.

We hadn't seen the lieutenant yet, but we heard he was a roarer, that made his mark on the Massachusetts. We was ordered for China, and a mess of the command officer afore we sailed, an' byenby he came aboard in a shore-boat, an' brought a little middy with him, as hansom a chap as ever you see with a face like a girl, an' curling brown hair an' sunny eyes.

We was all so took with him that we didn't half hev eyes for the lieutenant, a rather youngish man, almost like a boy, but with an eye that meant business.

"Pipe all hands to muster, Mr. Extein," says the commander, as he came up the side. "Stations for getting under way, sir."

You all know how it works aboard a man-o'-war. Men don't tumble over one another there, but lays their hands on jest such a spot an' goes to work; an' two hundred and fifty men lay heavy on the cap'tin's bars, I tell you, an' it was our duty to do you do it, then!

A brave man like you, an' a good-hearted one, ought to be able to conquer his love for liquor."

"Did you ever try it?" said the middy.

"Can't say that I ever did," says Jack. "That ain't no way, as I knows on, that cars enough for an old sailor to give him a word of good advice."

"Jack," says the boy, in his sweet voice, "I think you love me an' will do a good deed for me. I'm going to do it, an' I want you to do it for me. Don't take your grog when it is served out an' never touch it all the trip."

It was a hard thing, mates. There ain't a one of you but knows how a stiff horn of grog cheers a man up when the ice sticks to the rigging, an' every reef-point is an icicle.

"Tain't easy, my boy," says Jack.

"I know that, Jack; of course it isn't easy, but you'll do it for me."

"I won't promise," says Jack, "acause I ain't agoin' to lie to you."

"Will you promise to try?"

"I'll do that much; yes, I'll try."

That was all he would say, an' when the grog was mixed that night I looked at Jack to see what he'd do. He didn't touch it, an' the men shipwrecked to laugh him out of it, but they didn't run on Jack long; his fist was too heavy!

An' when we run into Canton, two weeks after, Jack hadn't touched a drop, an' after we had cast anchor the commander sent for him to the cabin.

"Busby," he said, "I hear a very good account of you."

Jack pulled his forelock an' looked pleased. It was the first good word he'd had from a commander in many a long day.

"Yes, my man," said the commander. "I like sober men, an' particularly when they steer my boat. I'll keep an eye on you an' if you keep it up, an' I think you will, you shall have no occasion to be sorry. You can go."

It seemed to me that Jack was two inches taller when he came out of the cabin, an' he walked straight up to the middy.

"I've quit," he said; "you may put it down with a big mark; Jack Busby has taken his last drink of grog."

"Stick by it, done some good in coming on board the Huntress, Jack," said the middy, "but—"

"At this moment the bos'n's pipe was heard."

"Gigs away!"

That was our boat, an' we jumped. Up came the old man, in full uniform, an' we pulled him to the flag-ship, which lay at anchor not far away. We stayed in the boat, an' in half an hour the commander was back, looking serious, an' back we went, an' to the surprise of every one the order came to get up the anchor.

An hour later we were running down the coast.

"I reckon it's a fight," he says. "One of the men on the flag as goes, as said we was going down to bombard the Oochin-Chinese."

An' that was it. An American ship had been wrecked on their coast, an' they had taken the crew an' cap'tin prisoners, an' the admiral had sent the Huntress down to see about it.

A vessel of the name of the Oochin-Chinese, where the prisoners were, an' sent a flag to demand them. They sent us word to come an' take them.

That meant fight, and a big fight, too. They had two thousand men in the fort, an' there ain't any better fighters in China than these men. They are more like the Malays than the Chinese, and we knew that our work was cut out for us.

So we got out the boats, an' landed a hundred an' fifty men, on the beach below the fort, covered by the fire of the Huntress, which kept the devils in their works. Every man had two revolvers an' his cutlass, an' though they were fifteen to one, we didn't seem to care. Just as we formed, Jack saw Willie Brown among the stormers.

"Stick by the boats, Willie," he says; "you ain't got no call to go."

"Silence!" cried Lieutenant Extein. "Ready, boys; boarders away!"

Then came the battle-yell of our blue-jackets, an' with a revolver in one hand an' cutlass in the other, we scaled the works an' attacked them. The beggars were so tickled at the idea of one hundred an' fifty men charging them, that they never closed their gates, an' half the men charged right up through the gateway, quivering the yellow cusses before them like sheep.

They never see such weepins, an' I reckon they never want to ag'in!

The cutlass, used by a handy sailor, is bad enough, but the revolving Colts was what bothered them. They had muskets at a rough nuke, but we got on them so quick they couldn't use them, an' the way we piled them up with the revolvers was just a sin. Most of them ran like men, but four or five hundred of the best rinded around the governor, brought down their long swords, an' charged us.

You ought to see us wade through them!

Jack was everywhere. His revolver never cracked but a yellor Mongol went down, an' when his cutlass hit a man, it just clove him to the chin.

We scattered the body-guard, an' Lieutenant Extein took the governor with his own hand, when we heard a cry, an' there was Willie Brown in the gateway, hurled along by two big rascals, with half a hundred more all round him.

"Come on, boys!" cried Jack. "I'll save that boy or die."

The next minute he was among them, cutting right an' left, an' had the boy out of their grip, an' the two men who held him under his feet.

They turned on him like tigers, and a dozen swords were at his breast at once. But he beat down the blades, an' for a while held his own, covering the boy, who was wounded in the right arm, with his own body. A dozen of us went at them, cutlass in hand, an' scattered them to the four winds; an' then we saw poor Jack on the ground, blood from head to foot, an' Willie trying to raise him.

"Hit hard, my boy!" he murmured. "Saved you, anyhow, an' I don't care for this old bulk."

Th' all was still, an' the boy fell sobbing beside the silent form of the brave coxswain. We lifted the wounded man tenderly, an' carried him down to the boats, an' on board the ship.

For weeks it was touch an' go, for the coxswain was terribly cut up, but at last they brought him round; an' I think it made him well on the spot when Willie put a bos'n's warrant into his hand, given for his bravery in the attack on the fort.

Willie Brown is third lieutenant now, an' Jack is back on his ship. I think he'd go down among the coal-passers sooner than not be in the same ship with his favorite; an' from that day to this he can pass the grog-tub an' never taste it, an' the young lieutenant will never lose the name of the "Coxswain's Pet."

## The Outlaw's Wife.

BY JOS. E. BADGER, JR.

As the rapid clattering of a horse's hoofs came to his ears, the traveler abruptly drew rein, one hand instinctively seeking the revolver that hung against his hip, his eyes keenly ranging ahead, until the narrow road lost itself among the thick-growing trees that made a living arch overhead. But the stern-set features relaxed as the rider came in view; as well they might.

A woman, young and almost bewilderingly beautiful, despite her plain, homely attire. A face that was purely oval, set in a frame of luxuriant curls, black and glossy as polished jet; a face with large, lustrous eyes, with full, red lips, between which could just be seen a gleam of white, even teeth, with skin that seemed living marble, just touched by the warm breath of the summer sun; a figure that was rounded and symmetry itself, that freely followed each motion of the generous bay horse—all this Harry Carter saw at the first glance.

He thought that made him notice the limp sun-bonnet that hung upon the woman's back, the plain riding-habit of brown calico that barely reached to the tip of her stout, country-made shoes.

Straight ahead the young woman rode, only drawing rein as the two horses fairly touched muzzles, for Carter, amazed by the shape his natural fears had taken, made no effort to give the road until the fair vision spoke:

"Are you one of the Youngers or James' boys who have you established a private toll-gate?"

"I beg pardon, lady," and Carter backed his horse into the edge of the brush, flushing hotly as her low, musical, yet almost taunting laugh rung in his ears. "But to meet an angel where one is expected a devil, is surely excuse enough for one's losing one's head."

"As a stranger—for none of our country lads could have uttered that speech without halting—to the natural curiosities of this region (angels in sun-bonnets included) you are very excusable. Good-morning, sir!"

"One moment," said Carter, as she was about to ride past him. "Can you tell me how far it is to the house of John Hazelwood. I am a stranger in these parts, and I begin to fear that I have lost my road."

"Squatter John's cabin stands close to this road, not two miles ahead; but whether you find him at home is doubtful. If not, your business is pressing, you will find the latch-string hanging out; pull it, make yourself at home, and old man will like you all the better for it when he comes back."

"You know the old gentleman, then?"

"We are neighbors. Once more—good-evening!"

With a half-saucy nod, the young woman loosened the reins and galloped rapidly away. Carter followed her with his eyes, and even turned his horse's head as though strongly tempted to follow her in the flesh. One quick, backward glance, then the winding road led her beyond his sight. Then a sharp cry of fear or pain, followed by the swiftly-receding trampling of iron-shod hoofs.

Without a moment's hesitation Carter put spurs to his horse and sped down the road, feeling as by instinct that the young lady had met with some mishap. Rounding the curve, he wrenched in his horse, with a cry of alarm. Just before him lay the young woman, like one dead. Her horse had disappeared along the winding road.

Leaping from the saddle, Carter stooped over the motionless figure, lifting her head to his breast, brushing the dirt and leaves from her curls. His horse, still smarting from the rankling of spurs, snorted and reared back, then turned as upon a pivot and galloped swiftly away.

Carter dropped the curly head, and instinctively started in pursuit, but only for a few yards. Pausing, he glanced first in the direction taken by his steed, then back to the fair stranger who now raised her head, a low, almost mocking laugh parting her lips. But as she sprung to her feet, the laugh was cut short by a gasp of pain, and tottering, she sunk back, her lips white and tightly compressed.

From that moment Carter forgot all about his horse, of the near-drawing night, of everything save the fair sufferer.

Her provoking audacity gone, she faintly replied to his eager questions. Her horse, saying, had thrown her heavily. Her foot had caught in the stirrup for a moment—long enough to severely twist her ankle, and for the brute to kick her twice in the side before dashing away.

"If I only had my horse—" hesitated Carter.

"Perhaps I can walk. It is not very far to our house. If you would be so kind—"

Clinging to his arm, she struggled to her feet, and even made several steps in advance, thus supported; but the effort seemed too great, and only for his quickly encircling arms, she must have fallen to the ground.

"Leave me—bring help," she breathed, faintly, her soft cheek pressing his breast, her breath fanning his face. The wolves may not—if you are quick—"

"I will not leave you," muttered Carter, his blood leaping hotly through his veins, and strong enough to carry you—if I only knew the road."

"You are so good—so kind!" and the large, liquid eyes gazed full into his. "I am so sorry to trouble you."

"I am paid a thousand fold," and there was a burning glow in the young man's eyes that told how truly he meant what he said. "Only for the pain you are feeling, I could wish that it might last forever!"

"Wouldn't a week or so do?" and the red lips parted with a little, shy laugh. "But I do not see what is to be done, for there are wolves about, and I should die of terror were I left alone. It is not a mile to our house—do you think you could carry me—"

For answer Carter lifted her easily, tenderly. "It must be nice to be a man—you are so strong! Please take that path through the woods—it is shorter."

Without a word, Carter entered the path indicated, and followed it with a quick, steady step, his heart beating like a trip-hammer, under the pressure of the warm, soft cheek. He seemed insensible to fatigue, though at any other time he would have found nine stone of flesh and blood a rather wearisome armor. But with those wonderful eyes occasionally meeting his, that bewitchingly beautiful face in such proximity to his own, he felt not the slightest fatigue, and strode on without pause for nearly half a mile. Nor would he have stopped then, but for sufficient cause.

A tall, roughly-clad man stepped from behind the sheltering trunk of a large elm, and barred the path. The lower portion of his face was hidden by one sun-emblazoned hand, clasping a cocked and leveled revolver.

"I reckon you're my meat, stranger!"

Surprised, as indeed he well might be, Carter paused abruptly, his arms slowly relaxing, the grasp, as he stared into the muzzle of the revolver.

"You're just the man I've been looking for," added the high-voiced, slightly lowering his weapon. "Just pull your weapon and toss it here, then you can get up an' git."

Carter wholly released his fair burden, and clasped his hand upon his hip; but his fingers closed only upon the empty scabbards—his revolvers were gone!